Imagining

Language

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Language

An

Anthology

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edited by
Jed Rasula and Steve McCaffery

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Introduction

Along the canonical spectrum, within the regulated normality of literature, there are occasional protuberances of another, submerged order: the literary phenomenon of the exception, the special case, like William Blake's multimedia prophecies; Christopher Smart's Jubilate Agno; *the procedural constraints for producing texts adopted by Raymond Roussel, the Surrealists, and members of Oulipo; the "sound poems" of Hugo Ball and the Dadaists, along with the "transrational"* zaum *of the Russian Futurists; the free-associative "continuous present" of Gertrude Stein; and, of course, the monumentally polyglot* Finnegans Wake. *These are a few instances of literary works that are frequently cited—and even have legendary status—yet remain somewhat peripheral. Blake and Joyce are among the most celebrated writers in English, so it is particularly compelling to reflect on their double relation to both a canonical center and its margin. Literature is a language art, and literary works are celebrated for their unique stylistic inflections of common parlance. Deviations from the linguistic norm by literary works render them valuable, exceptional; yet, oddly, the transgression of prevailing standards within the domain of literature is felt to mark works like* Finnegans Wake *or* Tender Buttons *as "unreadable" if not scandalous. There is, then, within the concept of literariness, a mistrust of superabundance that is inextricable from the very concept of literature, given the role of art as a prescriptive category of exceptions in the first place.*

If literature is defined as the exploration and exercise of tolerable linguistic deviance, the institutional custodianship of literature serves mainly to protect the literary work from language, shielding it from the disruptive force of linguistic slippage. But as numerous theoretical methodologies have discovered, language is at play underneath and in spite of the instituted labor of literature, and this substratum cannot be recuperated under the rubrics of "style," "genius," "creative talent," or any other familiar individuating code. As Emerson had foreseen when he declared language to be "fossil poetry," language appears already to be doing whatever the institution of authorship asserts as original. These determinate effects of language are registered in modalities and accidents that are incommensurate with the anthropological constraints defining "literature"—especially if by language *we mean the cognitive ground of subjectivity as well as the social texture of community.*

As a record of successive and varied estrangements from the familiar relation to language as compliant medium, this anthology situates an array of linguistic explorations in a continuum of creative conjecture. Commencing with the twentieth-century avant-garde, Imagining Language *goes on to document an expanded field of practices and theories spanning back across three millennia. Our selections range from the communal endeavor to the private delusion, from the memorably idiosyncratic to* *philanthropically motivated spelling reforms. Literary works range from the predenotational orality of sound poetry to the graphically irreducible. We also incorporate traditions of religious and philosophical speculation on language, from the sacred to the profane, encountering along the way a ludic ensemble including the familiar Rabelais and Lewis Carroll along with the lesser-known Bob Brown and John Riddell. We have deliberately sought to recontextualize the familiar within a spectrum of the unfamiliar. Juxtaposed with Marcel Duchamp,* Gulliver's Travels *sheds its familiarity as travel satire; and Victor Hugo is similarly transfigured by the proximity of Easter Island "rongo-rongo." Such juxtapositions are by no means gratuitous. During the years we worked on the anthology, a host of unexpected subterranean connections began to surface, and our arrangement evolved as a way of accommodating these emergent configurations. As a result, we circumvent chronology in order to illuminate unexpected congruitites between diverse and apparently discordant materials.*

While our partitional rationale is explicit (and forms the basis of our prefaces to each section), we are well aware that many of the selections could just as well be represented in another category. Our hope is that readers will find the format sufficiently suggestive and elastic to allow continuing cross-fertilization and conceptual reorganization. Each of the five parts of Imagining Language *maps a familiar principle. Part One, "Revolution of the Word," anchors the anthology to a particular literary adventure: international modernism, its documentary journal* transition, *and that journal's partisanship of* Finnegans Wake. *Modernism (particularly under the preemptive sway of "postmodernism") appears all too familiar; so we put on display here a deliberately unfamiliar portfolio. In doing so we tacitly adopt for the anthology as a whole the modernist strategy of "defamiliarization." Part Two, "Oralities, Rituals, and Colloquies," extends one facet of modernism, sound poetry, into a broader field of orality ranging from community idiolects to mystical glossolalia. It concludes with scenarios of linguistic transaction in the section titled "Fictive Encounters." Part Three, "Lost and Found in Translation," addresses the perennial theme of linguistic boundaries. These range from the theory and practice of translation, and the schematic interface between speech and writing, to the linguistic border between sanity and psychosis. Part Four, "Letters to Words," charts the pursuit of language's constitutive elements, its parts and particles given in the form of script and scripture. Whether the linguistic sign is taken as a building block of the universe or as an alphabetic unit, there is a tantalizing threshold at which signification reverts to noise and vice versa, where the apparently insignificant looms into imaginative consequence. Finally, Part Five, "Matter and Atom," historically corroborates a tradition attentive to linguistic microparticles, documenting the telluric affiliations of language which achieve an ontological contour in the Lucretian theory of the* clinamen, *the world-inaugurating swerve of atoms (and/as the word-inaugurating activity of letters).*

Rather than suggesting how readers might use these materials, we will comment on our own orientation and the paths by which we came to assemble this anthology in the first place. Imagining Language *was originally conceived by Jed Rasula in 1983 while working for the ABC television program*

"Ripley's Believe It or Not," on which Steve McCaffery appeared with the sound poetry group The Four Horsemen as part of a segment on "bizarre" language practices. Rasula's portfolio for the program soon exceeded the bounds of network television. Grateful for McCaffery's invaluable suggestions for the project, Rasula invited him to become coeditor in 1992. While the initial vision and design of the anthology was Rasula's, the final shape could not have been accomplished alone. A provisional division of editorial labor proved permeable in the end, and it is no longer possible to attribute individual authorship to any of the editorial matter in the anthology.

Our perspective on the material gathered here was initially literary, but conspicuously inflected by the provocations of continental theory. Our attraction to critical theory in the 1970s was motivated by our own poetic practice. In the academic sphere, theory has often been a paranoiac waxworks; but for us, the "floating signifier," "intertextuality," "the pleasure of the text," and "the death of the subject" seemed uncannily congruent with a heterogeneity of creative stimuli attracting us like a gravitational field—from 'pataphysics and Dada to sound poetry and the discussions initiated in L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E *magazine, to which we both contributed. The doctrinal alliances, declarations, and prohibitions now associated with institutionalized theory are beside the point, when those theories are traced to the little-known antecedents anthologized here. For instance, Roland Barthes's passionate absorption in André Masson's calligrams cannot be reduced to the "poststructuralist" interpretation of a "Surrealist" painter—particularly when Barthes's supposedly denominational sympathies are revealed to share much with the eighteenth-century Welshman Rowland Jones, the "alphabet of desire" of English magus Austin Osman Spare, and the Baroque combinatorials of Juan Caramuel de Lobkowitz. Likewise, the diacritical modulations of William Bullokar and Claudius Holybrand presage by three centuries the Derridean practice of* sous rature *or the putting under erasure of a dysfunctional concept. In the preface to our concluding section "Clinamen" we draw attention to the Lucretian atomic swerve that sets in motion the genesis of worlds and words. Theory too is susceptible to this volatility and change, to plastic readaptation and altered functioning in which its cultural status is forcibly subjected to a metamorphic shift.*

Despite frequent nods to a "linguistic turn" in the human sciences in recent decades, a crude schematic persists in which our present era is accorded a sophisticated realization of the arbitrariness of the sign, while the premodern is associated with a naive confidence in the fitting of word to thing. With this anthology we hope to adjust and historicize this pervasive misguided shorthand. We hope to unsettle the minimally informed assumption of the Saussurean model of the sign as preliminary to any other. This is not to deny the influence of Saussure, but to acknowledge the scope and prodigality of linguistic speculation in the West going back to the pre-Socratics. We should stress, however, that we have not undertaken this anthology as a contribution to linguistics; nor have we attempted to integrate the often daunting discriminations of semiotics into our presentation, despite its congeniality to our orientation. The emphasis is finally on the creative ability to imagine *rather than to theorize language, and we* *have been prepared to hear Jacob Boehme and Gertrude Stein as no less authoritative on this account than Umberto Eco and Roman Jakobson.*

Imagining Language *is a large anthology that could be indefinitely expanded, so it is best to declare what we have* not *included. We have included little that could be termed "concrete" or visual poetry, because it is readily available elsewhere. This is also the case with many of the obvious candidates from the modernist avant-garde, like Apollinaire, Marinetti, and Breton. The Euro-American axis of the majority of our selections reflects limitations of awareness, practicality, and accessibility. Pictographic systems around the world are pertinent, but conveniently available in both scholarly and popular presentations. Nor have we attempted to incorporate works appealing to the libidinal release of pure textuality, such as "écriture féminine," which in most cases are too intricately dependent on theoretical charters and cannot be intelligibly excerpted. Confining ourselves to the imagination* of *language—as opposed to works that make imaginative* use *of language—we compiled a portfolio far in excess of what a single volume (even of this magnitude) could accommodate. Documentary completeness being well beyond our ambition or competence, we have opted instead to structure the anthology in an internally refractory fashion, so the antiphonal reverberations of voices and texts may resemble a circus more than an inventory. In keeping with that spirit, we have not sought strict consistency of presentation. The section prefaces vary in length and tone; and captions introducing individual selections are not uniformly distributed throughout.*

Our selections draw from figures familiar in numerous disciplines, including linguistics, literature, philosophy, art, religion, occultism, and psychoanalysis. This diversity makes the anthology resist subsumption into a single tradition. Yet there is—and we have been inspired by—a loosely framed context of French speculation on the phenomenon of linguistic "delirium." Michel Pierssens, Jean-Jacques Lecercle, and Marina Yaguello have done much to chart a renegade Francophone legacy (and Lecercle has incorporated Anglophone traditions in his model). In the end, Imagining Language *encompasses a vaster domain of linguistic euphoria than that suggested by Pierssen's "logophiles," Yaguello's "lunatic lovers," and Lecercle's victims of "délire." The socially delinquent compass that the French find paradigmatic is not sufficient for a language imagined under the sign of the* clinamen*—a model that retains Gary Snyder's recognition of languages as "naturally evolved wild systems." "So language does not impose order on a chaotic universe, but reflects its own wildness back."*

An eventual site of reception of Imagining Language *is the "interactive" environment of multimedia communications systems. Hypertext and the World Wide Web are symptomatic of how literacy is being reconfigured. In* Imagining Language *we offer a seismic disturbance, a rupture of the framing devices that would reassure us of the desirability of linguistic inertia, of communications complacently dedicated to what Jean Baudrillard calls "the automatic writing of the world." Within the vast archive of imagined language from which we draw, a serendipitous reserve has been accumulating that may only now be legible. As the "end of the book" is declared, our authors remind us that the book was never* *fully distinguishable from an atmospheric and environmental background—the "book of nature" and the "cosmic script"—nor can language be extricated from the computational complexity of the brain and the imaginal manifold of the body. To say of language that there's no getting out of it is not a declaration of nihilistic entrapment, for language is above all the transcultural image of flexibility; of provisionality and commitment, perplexity and security, certainty and wonder. To wonder about language is to pass into that realm where we can imagine anything at all.*

Jed Rasula and Steve McCaffery
Kingston and Toronto, May 1996

Note on the Text

The dates of all the materials in the anthology are indicated parenthetically in the Table of Contents. Specific sources can generally be ascertained by consulting either the bibliography, the publication credits contained in the acknowledgments, or the headnotes prefacing individual selections.

Most of the works included in Imagining Language *are either complete texts or complete extracts from longer works. The exceptions are as follows: (1) autonomous texts that have been abridged (Blood, Fenollosa, Jolas, Shaw); and (2) extracts from longer works, in which the extracts have themselves been edited (A.E., Aristophanes, Boehme, Bulwer, Griaule, Jones, Joyce, Kallir, Schreber, Swedenborg, Tory, Urquhart, Whythorne). Excisions are almost always minor, ranging from a phrase to a short paragraph at most. In every instance excisions have been indicated in the text by ellipses.*

Using the Anthology

The index facilitates cross-referencing of proper names; but cross references are frequently given in the prefaces to the different sections as well as in headnotes to specific texts. Editorial footnotes have been minimized, and are strictly discursive—appearing at the end of the preface in which they occur. (Footnotes in the texts themselves are by the original authors, and are printed at the foot of the page.) Page references to works cited in the editorial prefaces and headnotes are printed consecutively at the end of the book, in "Sources of Quotations," where they can be conveniently keyed to the bibliography. Following the "Sources" we offer "Further Reading," which briefly summarizes material in the bibliography in terms of the topics of our organizing sections.

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Part One

Revolution of the Word

Words in Freedom

When Paul Valéry first encountered Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard *by Mallarmé in 1897, he had the sensation that "space itself truly spoke, dreamed, and gave birth to temporal forms. Expectancy, doubt, concentration, all were* visible things. *With my own eye I could see silences that had assumed bodily shapes. Inappreciable instants became clearly visible: the fraction of a second during which an idea flashes into being and dies away; atoms of time that serve as the germs of infinite consequences lasting through psychological centuries—at last these appeared as beings, each surrounded with a palpable emptiness. . . . There in the same void with them, like some new form of matter arranged in systems or masses or trailing lines, coexisted the Word!" Mallarmé's poem possessed a cosmological potency.* "He has undertaken," *Valéry reflected,* "finally to raise a printed page to the power of the midnight sky." *"I was* now *caught up in the very text of the silent universe." As it was for Valéry,* Un coup de dés *continues to be a tangible opening through which words pass on their way to freedom.*

The impresario of Futurism, F. T. Marinetti, fell under the sway of Mallarmé's experiment even as he felt it necessary to denounce it. The Futurist sense of "words in freedom" was of words liberated from the rectilinear measure of the compositor's page and recomposed on the analogy with telegraphic communication, or words broadcast without the material support of cable or syntax. The coordinated composition by field (to anachronistically use Charles Olson's term) in Italian Futurism thus extends equally to paintings by Carlo Carrà, Gino Severini, and Giacomo Balla as well as to texts by Marinetti, Paolo Buzzi, Ardengo Soffici, and others. The poems, like the paintings, tend to be organized around pictorial vectors of energy and intensity, in which the visual work invites reading as readily as the poems solicit viewing. Marinetti's martial enthusiasms were especially well served by the strategy of pictorial composition, as he transcribed combat experiences into iconogrammatic explosions. "My revolution is directed against the so-called typographical harmony of the page," he wrote. "Instead, I want to grasp [words] brutally and hurl them in the reader's face." Claiming affinity with molecular and mechanical force, Marinetti declared a "typographical revolution that allows me to impress on the words (already free, dynamic, and torpedo-like) every velocity of the stars, the clouds, aeroplanes, trains, waves, explosives, globules of seafoam, molecules, and atoms." The frenzy of Futurism is finally autodestructive, "a demolition apparatus aimed first at convention and then at itself."

In Literary Futurism, *John J. White distinguishes four strands of Futurist graphism: iconicity, collage and the painted word, telegraphic minimalism, neologism and syntactic invention. Words in freedom, as an expansion from verbal to visual sense, stand indebted to "abstract" or nonrepresentational painting. While the Italian Futurists largely adhered to a representational base* disrupted *by* *bursts of liberated elements, Russian Futurists focused on "The Word as Such" and "The Letter as Such" (in manifestos by Kruchenykh and Khlebnikov). "You have seen the letters in their words—lined up in a row, humiliated, with cropped hair" as they characterize letters in their "gray prisoner's uniform[s]." In Holland, De Stijl theosophist Piet Mondrian advocated a "pure plasticism" in all the arts:* "Music *tends toward the liberation of* sound," *he wrote,* "literature *toward the liberation of* word." *The convergent stimuli of painterly abstraction, Cubist multiperspectivism, mystical and theosophical theories of linguistic germination, and a new respect for the gestural resources in all the arts inspired a widespread liberation of the poetic word before, during, and after the First World War, although the impulse might be traced back to Mallarmé's insistence on "get[ting] from the sentence to the* letter *through the word." These activities were presented under a variety of names: "parole in libertà" (Marinetti), "onomalingua" (Fortunato Depero), "palpavoce" and "poesia pentagrammata" (Cangiullo), "zaum" (Kruchenykh and Khlebnikov), "beeldende" (van Doesburg, under the pseudonym I. K. Bonset), and "simultanéisme" (Apollinaire and Cendrars). At the same time, Ezra Pound was editing "The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry" by Ernest Fenollosa (see "Retentions and Secretions," p. 509 below), which might have served as a collective manifesto for these theories if Pound had been favorably inclined toward them. The principle of words in freedom could easily be extended to the entire burgeoning field of the pre- and postwar avant-garde; and while the Dada sound poems of Ball and Hausmann and the Merz sensibility of Schwitters are pertinent, it is the* design *aspect that needs to be stressed here. As our selection from Morgenstern indicates, the wordless armature of language can be surveyed as a catalogue of marks, frames, grids, lines, punctuation, accents, and other paraphernalia supplementary to words themselves. "Night Song of the Fish" supplements the em dash with a fish-scale scallop, resulting in a perfectly binary design like the dot/dash signal of Morse code, and of course the long/short indicators in prosody.*

The Italian Futurists, fond of theatricality, deployed typographic dynamism as a script for "synoptic declamation" involving (in performance) noise instruments, a mechanized physical demeanor, and constant movement around the performance space so as to physically scatter words in freedom like carrier pigeons. John White discriminates between the "language of sound" in Italian Futurism and the "sound of language" experiments of the Russian Futurists, revealing a phonetic predisposition in Futurism overall. Also, despite disgruntlement with the Symbolism that immediately preceded it, Futurism often intuitively clung to the Symbolist belief that language aspires to the condition of music—a thesis literally carried out in Francesco Cangiullo's book Poesia Pentagrammata *(1923), from which we print "Golfo Estivo" here.*

An alternative organization of liberated language in poetry regarded the page as itself a performative venue, not merely a way station to a further enactment. Apollinaire's calligrammes and Kamensky's "ferroconcrete" poems established a visual template for this pictorial union of word and image (closer, perhaps, to the Futurist painters' "tavole parolibere" or pictures deploying alphabetic elements); and of course Un coup de dés *established the criteria for typographic precision as an integral feature* of poetic composition. After Mallarmé, poets not only wrote words but traversed a space. This is nowhere more apparent than in the 68 seismographic and astral diagrams (or "stylizations") of Ernest Fraenkel. Using Mallarmé's poem as the template for visual design, Fraenkel's images inaugurate a truly *graphic* mode of literary analysis. Recognizing that the poem has a visual texture, Fraenkel notes that "un *texte plastique* reste caché dans les couches extraconscientes du psychisme du poète, parallèle au *texte verbal* du poème" (a plastic text rests hidden in the extra-conscious layers of the poet, paralleling the verbal text of the poem).[1] If one attends to the ocular scanning movements, the specific words of the poem are resolved into a visual rhythm that accommodates not only the left-to-right reading profile of Western writing, but the "façon sémitique" of the Middle East and even the verticality of Asian calligraphy.[2] A corresponding effect is achieved by Marcel Broodthaers, whose 1969 realization of *Un coup de dés* adopts Fraenkel's strategy but is printed on transparent pages, so the bars representing lines of Mallarmé's poem appear in a receding field of overlays.

By 1917 Guillaume Apollinaire was prepared to claim that poets—possessed of an "encyclopedic liberty" in their new "synthetic poems"—were "creating new entities which have a plastic value." "Typographical artifices worked out with great audacity have the advantage of bringing to life a visual lyricism which was almost unknown before our age . . . and one can predict the day when, the photograph and the cinema having become the only form of publication in use, the poet will have a freedom heretofore unknown." Apollinaire's calligrammes, first appearing in *Les Soirées de Paris* in 1914, were acclaimed by critics as an evolutionary development, "because it is necessary that our intelligence become accustomed to understanding synthetico-ideographically instead of analytico-discursively." Innovative typography was not unique to avant-garde poetry. It was increasingly an option of advertising design (although it was largely through the Bauhaus and other modernist workshops that typographic design was fortified by the range of display formats to which we're now accustomed). Mallarmé was keenly attentive to the implications of poster designs for poetry. Walter Benjamin remarked that "the letter and the word which have rested for centuries in the flat bed of the book's horizontal pages have been wrenched from their position and have been erected on vertical scaffolds in the streets as advertisement." In 1927 Blaise Cendrars declared that "advertising is the flower of contemporary life" and that the "chief characteristic of worldwide advertising is its lyricism." "It carries out your poetics," he told fellow poets. The proto-concrete poetry of the early twentieth century reinforces the sense, by means of typography, that poems are advertisements for themselves.

A further practice of words in freedom is the free-associational method of Gertrude Stein. Too much has been made, perhaps, of her experience as a student of William James, and her participation in Hugo Münsterberg's experiments involving automatic writing as a calculated disruption of verbal habit. The nuanced theorizing Stein retrospectively applied to her development (in *Narration*, *How to Write*, and *Lectures in America*) suggests rather that semantic surfaces are being subjected to an underlying rhythmic intelligibility. Her famous "continuous present" addresses the "inexplicable predicament of . . . transportation," as Mina Loy puts it, its "tenuous and vibrational" nature an attempt *"to track intellection back to the embryo." "The time of the composition is the time of the composition," writes Stein in "Composition as Explanation." This apparent tautology goes against the grain of common assumptions about writing, for it proposes that compositional time does not* represent *another time—it does not posit itself as a deferral, but as* present enactment.[3] *Stein's presentational immediacy registers a bifurcation of its occasion, the "two times going at once" of writer and reader; but the challenge remains one of "making what I know come out as I know it, come out not as remembering." By this procedure Stein extends to her readers a comparable overcoming of what she called* mammon, *the demon of complaisant recognition. Stein's work is an explosive and altogether prescient claim for a readerly writing a half-century before Roland Barthes's more influential essay "From Work to Text" (in* The Rustle of Language*), fully justifying Loy's vision of Stein as a physicist in "the laboratory / of vocabulary . . . extract[ing] / a radium of the word."*

The modernist "revolution of the word" was, among other things, a liberation of letters from subservience to correct speech and proper spelling, decorum, and taste. "The mere word 'freedom' is the only one that still excites me," wrote André Breton in his 1924 "Manifesto of Surrealism." For William Carlos Williams the emancipation of words was nothing less than "a dance over the body of [one's] condition": "To understand the words as so liberated is to understand poetry. That they move independently when set free is the mark of their value. . . . As birds' wings beat the solid air without which none could fly so words freed by the imagination affirm reality by their flight."

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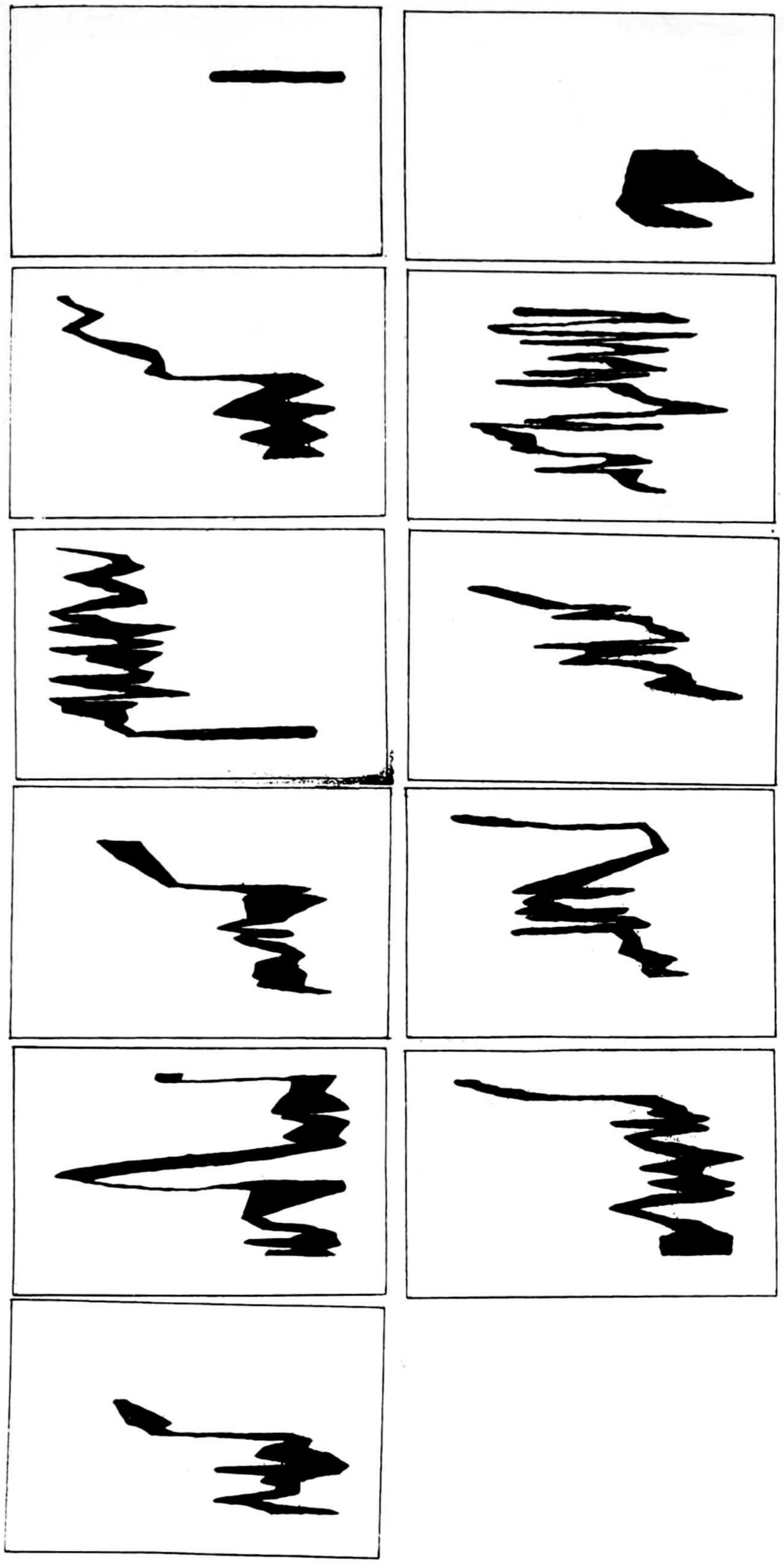
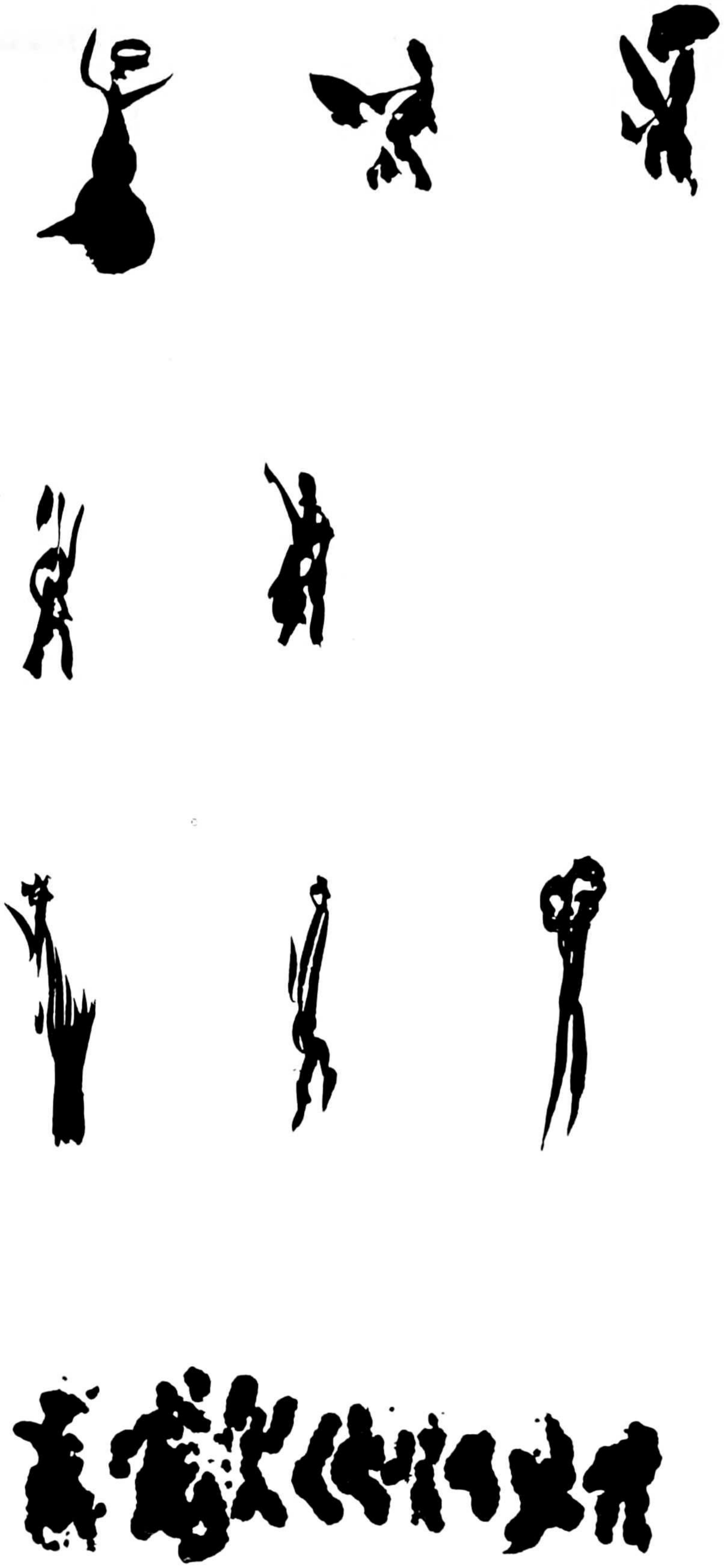
[1] An example of Fraenkel's "stylizations" of Mallarmé's poem appears at left on the facing page. The diagrammatic figures—reading left to right—reproduce the shape of the eleven pages of Mallarmé's text (beginning with the title page).

[2] French poet Henri Michaux was drawn to the hieroglyphic potential of Western writing, notably by way of the doodle, that languorous disinhibiting of penmanship, as in the images at right on the facing page. For a comparison with Fraenkel's linear approximations of Mallarmé above, see the Michaux illustration reproduced in the preface to "Transpositions" (p. 202 below).

[3] Max Picard's ruminations on the attributes of the long sentence are pertinent to Stein (not to mention Henry James): "In the long sentence the mind has time to look around: there is a pondering quality in the long sentence and in the time which is gathered into the long sentence there is a reference to the time during which the object came into being: it comes into being all over again."



Fraenkel's Mallarmé



Michaux

Christian Morgenstern

"The fish are dumb and so cannot express themselves in any other way than by dumb signs." Morgenstern called this night song a phonetic poem.

Night Song of the Fish

Fisches Nachtgesang

—
◡ ◡
— — —
◡ ◡ ◡ ◡
— — —
◡ ◡ ◡ ◡
— — —
◡ ◡ ◡ ◡
— — —
◡ ◡ ◡ ◡
— — —
◡ ◡
—

Gertrude Stein

Conditions ["Old and Old," I]

House plants.

Cousin to cousin the same is a brother.

Collected tumblers.

Pretty well so called, pretty careful and going all the detention.

Hopping.

Pretty well Charlie, pretty sour poison in pears, pretty well henny soon most soon bent.

Collect.

In do pot soon, in loud coal bust, in do pot soon, in chalk what.

In do pot soon in hold hot. In do pot soon, in due point, in die point.

In due point and most visible.

In vain, in vain, in a vein, in a vein. In do point that. Bay weight and balk and be wet. Be wake and white and be wet. Be count and lunge and see wall, be how, be how but can than.

Be how not inches, be have no cone grass, be who come in tear, be who coat.

Collect.

Couple calling, call cuts, call peaches and way laden and brim, brims and climate, a whole paper, little holes, and little hole, little holes.

Crowd a collection with large layers, ages, ages and ages, ten, control, kill hen, hurry in, hurry. Hold up. Saw a case cool most, come with him. Come with him. Come and trim, come in, come. Come, come, come.

Call all coupling just that please and a way to irrigate is a fountain, a folding dish and a head meadow, a folding glass and a heated moan, a brittle orange and a soon, all so soon, acres sideling. Acres sudden and a pole mischurch, miss olives, miss old age collars and cuffs and rhubarb, rub roads, roll extras, rule a case of set smashes and no pillows, no pleasure pillows. No waking cases, no closed colors, no colored suddens, no votes, no viols, no mixed peas, no regular soap stones, no regular stools, no regular ones, no such bad eggs, no cold chicken no shadow, no winter seen, no bowls, no carrots, no joints, no slender peals, no cape cuts, no batter and always more, always a season.

The grass, the grass is a tall sudden calendar with oats with means, only with cages, only with colors and mounds and little blooms and countless happy eggs to stay away and eat, eat that. The high arrangement which makes colds is that. A grand stand a real old grand stand and means and trees and coats and bars and cherries and wheels and boxes and cooking and limes and bowels and butter and points and points.

Cold wets and cold woods and cold cow harness and cold in the stretch and more pleasing reason with the cheque in the book and a dress and a dress and a medium choice and a blooming chest and a passing supper and a little cheese and a white a white and a wet white tool and a pole and a straw and a little chicking bean and a little toe white and a little cow soon. A little kew a little piece of an hopeless pre barometer and jelly cups, a way both heat, a way they heat cold. A single thing is dandy, a soiled monkey eating ahead. A spoon, a coat, a collided blotter and a case.

CANZONE RUMORISTA

cantata in coro sui teatri d'Italia in ANICCAM del 2000
Musica di Casavola - Scenario, costumi, canzone di DEPERO

Zin zuozzi zuizzi zuezzi zuazzi | Zin zizzi zizzi | Zon zozzo zozzo | Zan zazza zazza

TITI—klà TITI—klè TITI – klò

plep te te te te
plup tu tu tu tu
plap ta ta ta ta
plip ti ti ti ti

Hopotòm tro-tro-tro
trrrrrrrrrrr

Hapatàm tra-tra-tra
trrrrrrrrrrr

Hupùtum tru-tru-tru
trrrrrrrrrrr

TITO' TITA' TITEN.... TENNN......
TITO' TITA' TITEN.... TENNN......
TITO' TITA' TITEN.... TENNN......

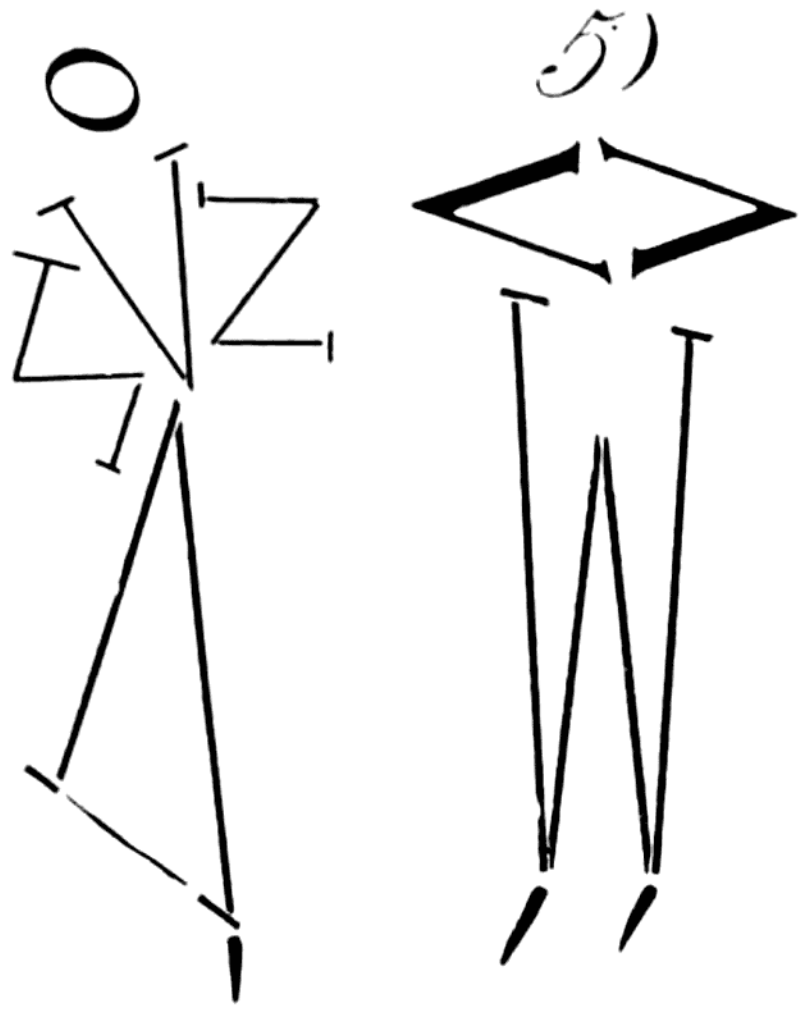
tiffi—nuffo—cuf—cuf
azza—noffo—cof—cof

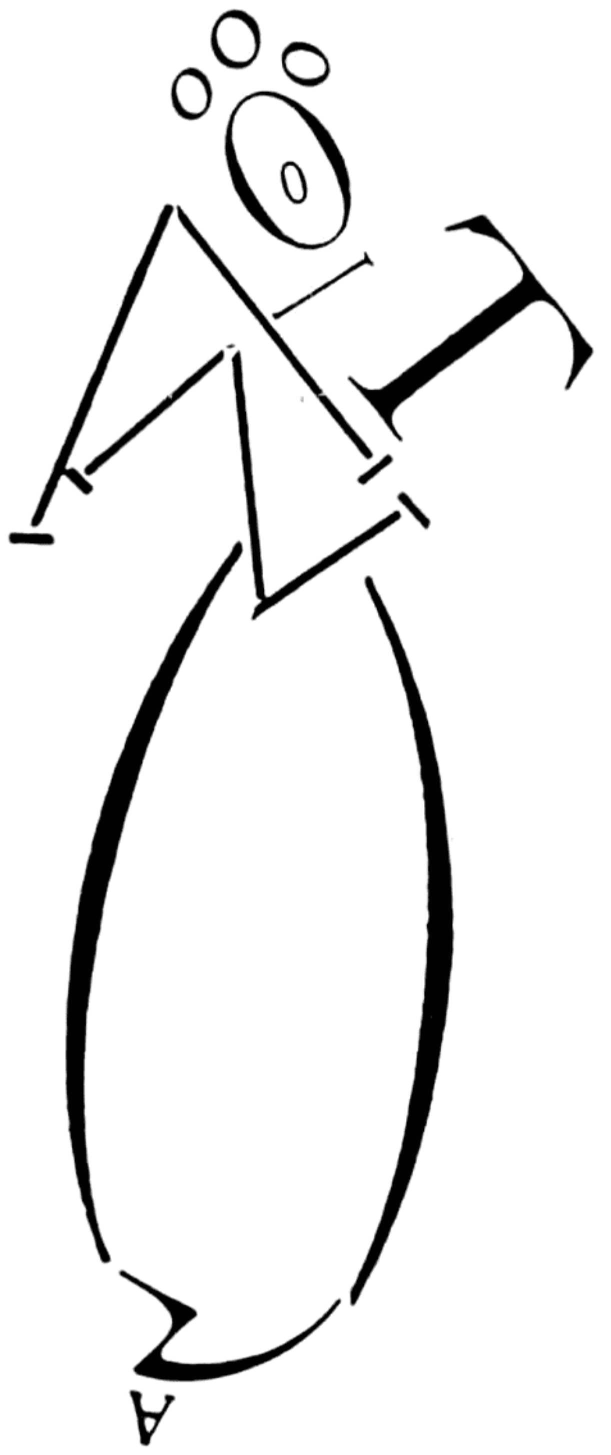
FANO' ***fofofofofo Blà***
NIFA' ***babababa Flò***

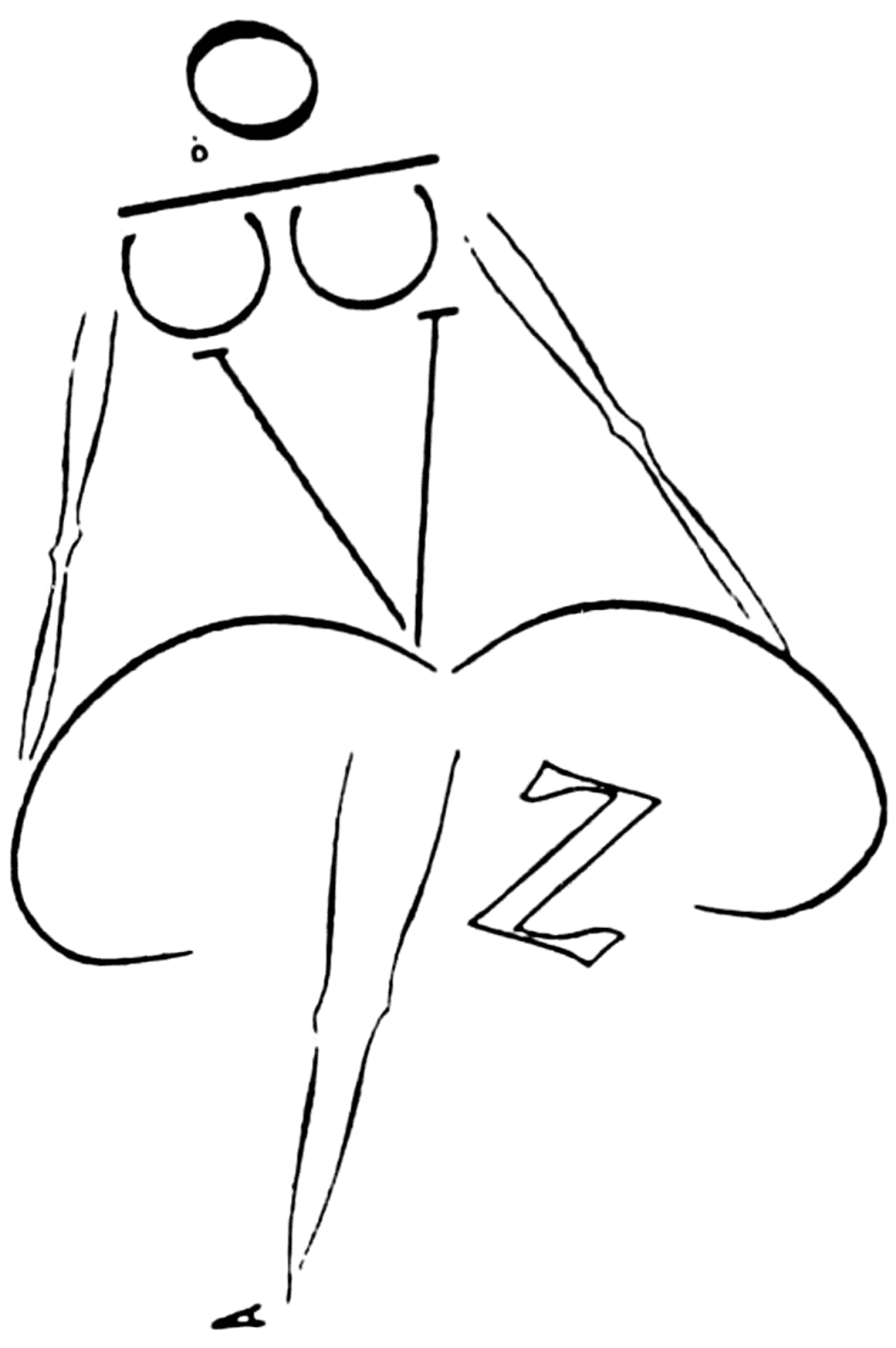
offa namblà — Blamba—noffààààà
staff....... staff.......
staff........ staff........ staff.......

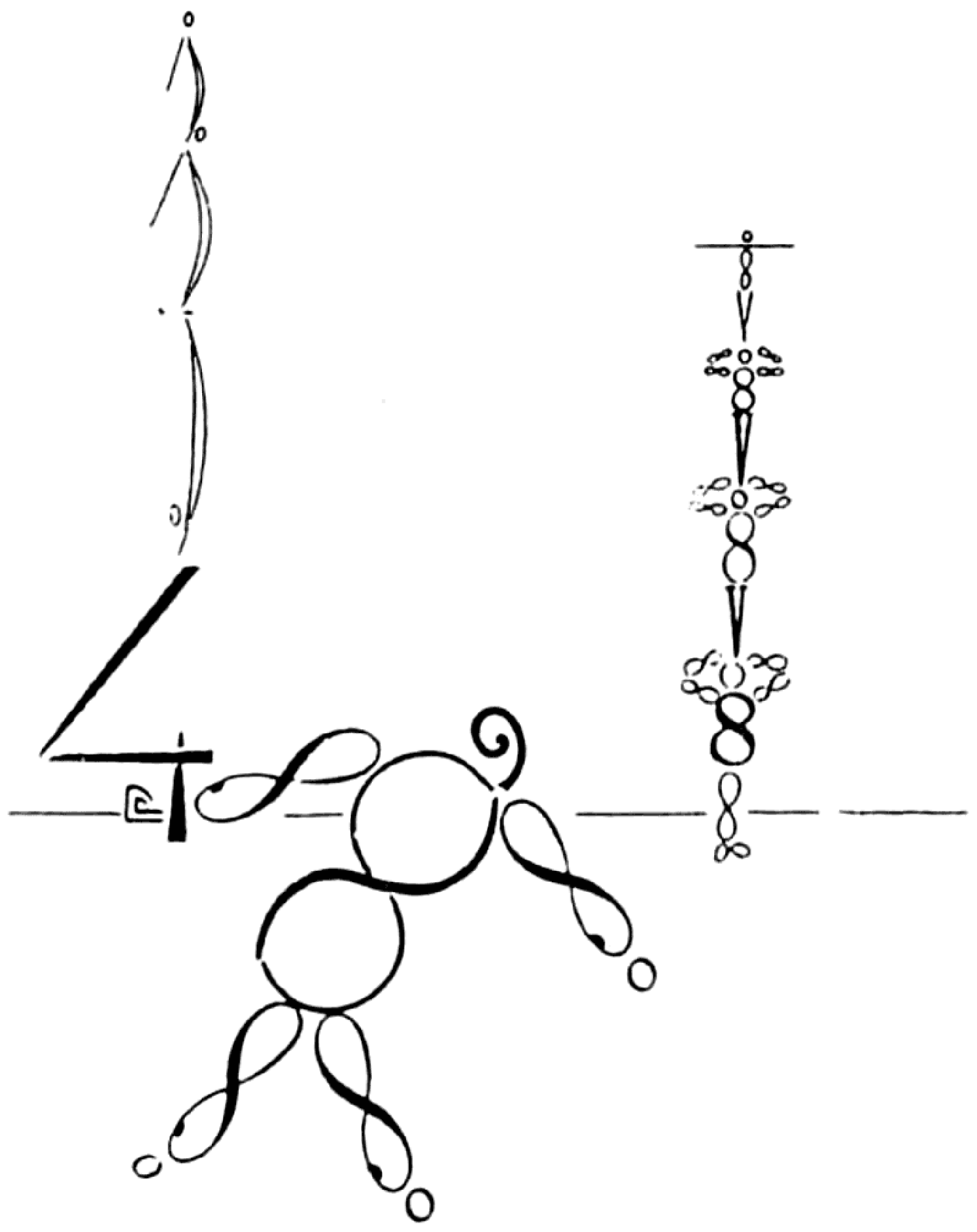
Francesco Cangiullo

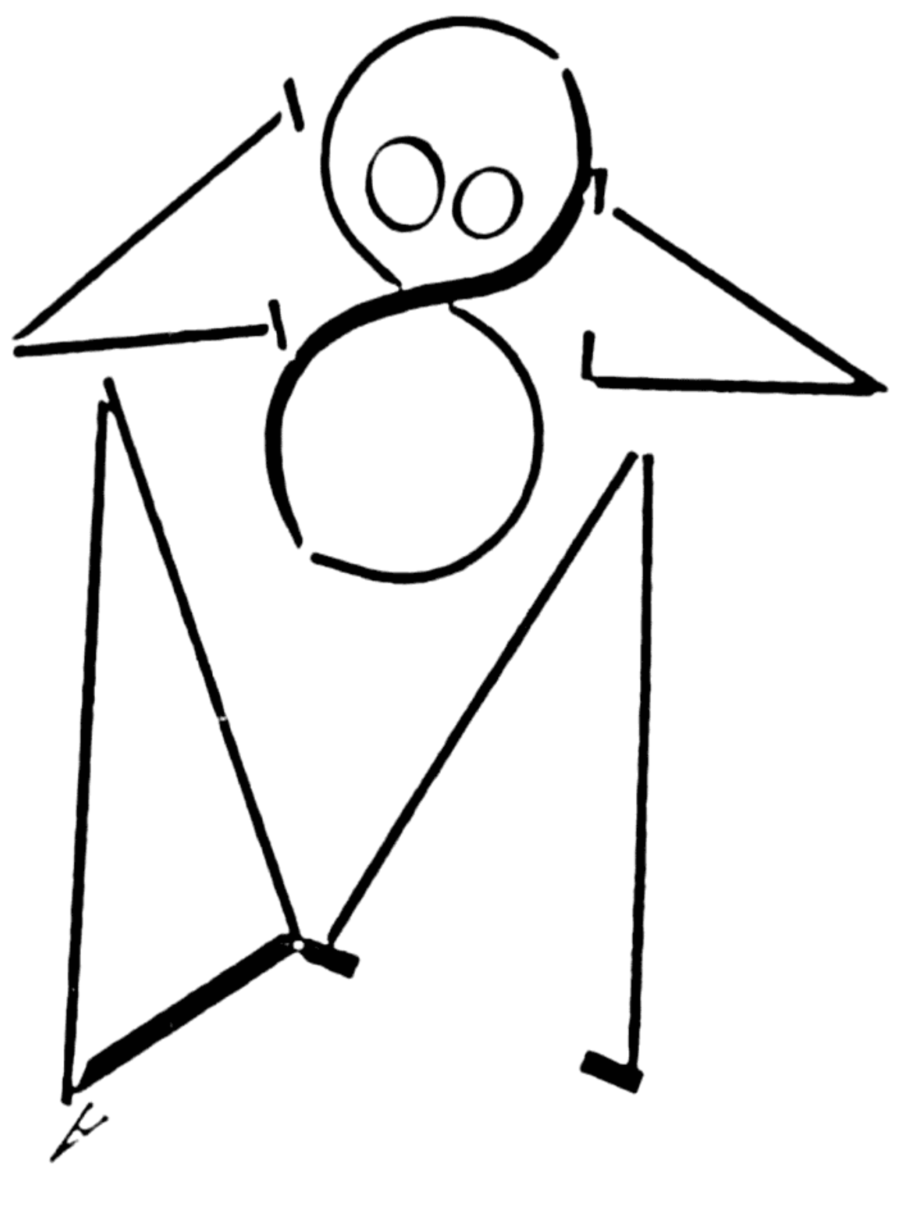
Caffè Concerto: Alfabeto a Sorpresa

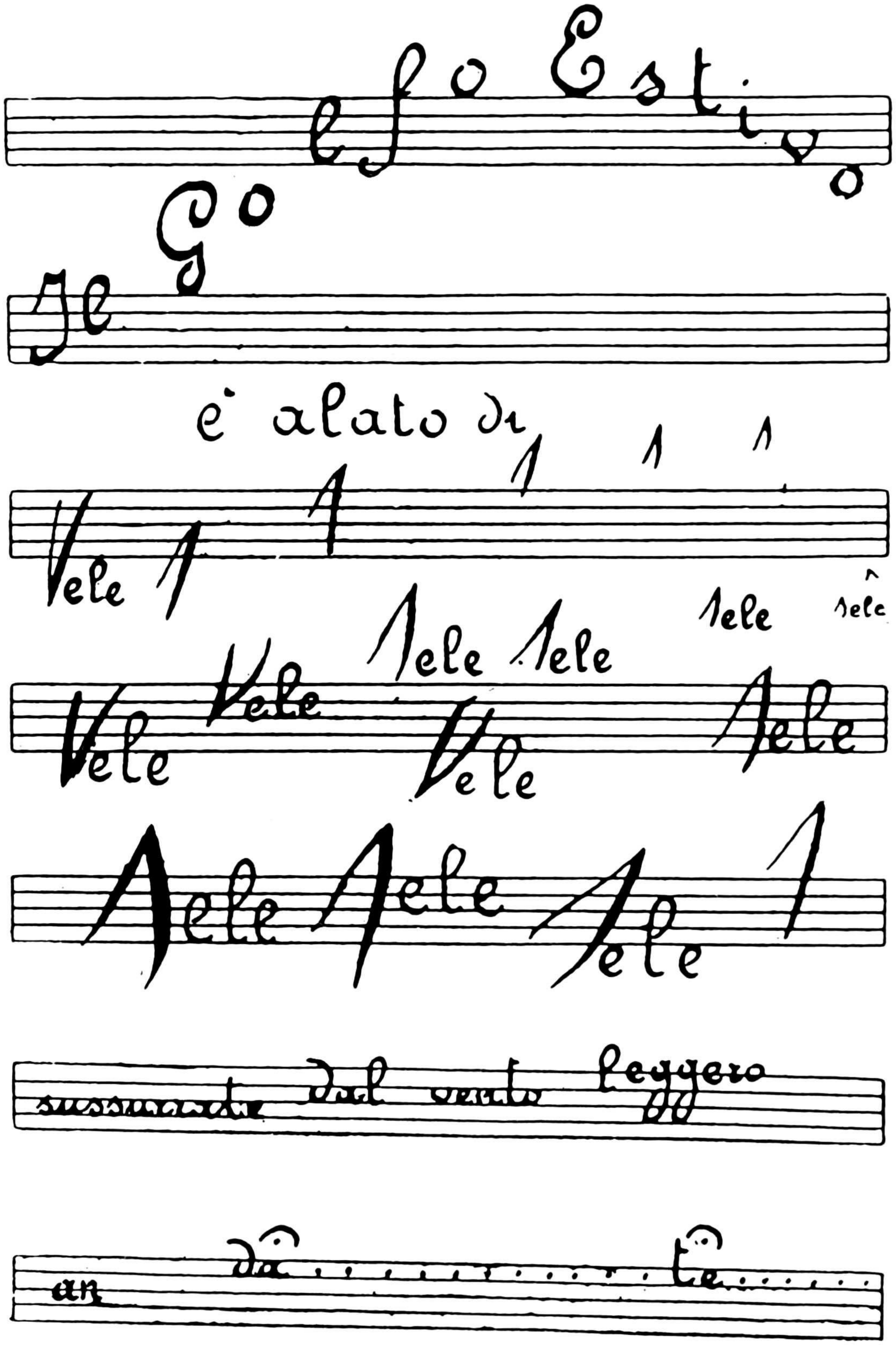












Il Golfo Estivo

è alato di

Vele

vele vele vele vele

Vele Vele Vele vele

vele vele vele

sussurrante dal vento leggero

an da . . . . te . . . .

I. K. Bonset

I. K. Bonset was a pseudonym for the literary activities of Dutch artist Theo van Doesburg, editor of De Stijl, *the international avant-garde journal. Van Doesburg's literary contributions to* De Stijl *appeared under the name Bonset, and Bonset was listed as editor of another journal,* Mecano. *De Stijl declared itself in a 1918 manifesto as seeking a new consciousness of time, and a new interface between the individual and the universal in the wake of world war. Bonset's poetic theory followed these principles in the paradoxical declaration that while "the conceptually charged sentence is obviously meaningless to poetry," it is "the nonsensical sentence [which] may well be meaningful." Bonset's advocacy of a destruction of syntax reiterated the familiar Futurist posture, to which was added a spiritualist distinction sharing affinities with Kandinsky and Mondrian: "the new poetry has truly been completely liberated from these logical classifying elements of human consciousness. it knows neither a next-to-each-other nor an after-each-other. its dimensions are in the spaceless and the timeless . . . it is a priori super-dimensional, superreal and counter-morphic." Bonset's poetic practice ranged from cubism and expressionism in its early stages to the more abstract "X-Beelden," eventually arriving at the "letterklankbeelden" of 1920 reproduced here. However, as early as 1915 he was experimenting with wordless sound structures:*

A –
aba –
ça ça ça
ça
da,
da,da, –
da da da –

A Letterklankbeelden Poem

I

C
S
S
C
s–
Z'

Q
K
Q'
Q'
Q'

R—
R-
O

O
X'

A–
H–
a_
h_
M– –
N
M
H
M

p'

II

Q-K X'

Q X
X'
m M M M–
X'

III

Z' Z' Z' Z'
i _ _
Z' Z' Z'
i _ _
Z' Z'
i _ _
Z
a

p' p'
P P P P P P P

a
i _ _
X K M
X K M
X K M
Q_
Q' U'
U' Q'
f f f
K f_
O'
O_
H'
X R
Q K
Q R O i'
M _ _

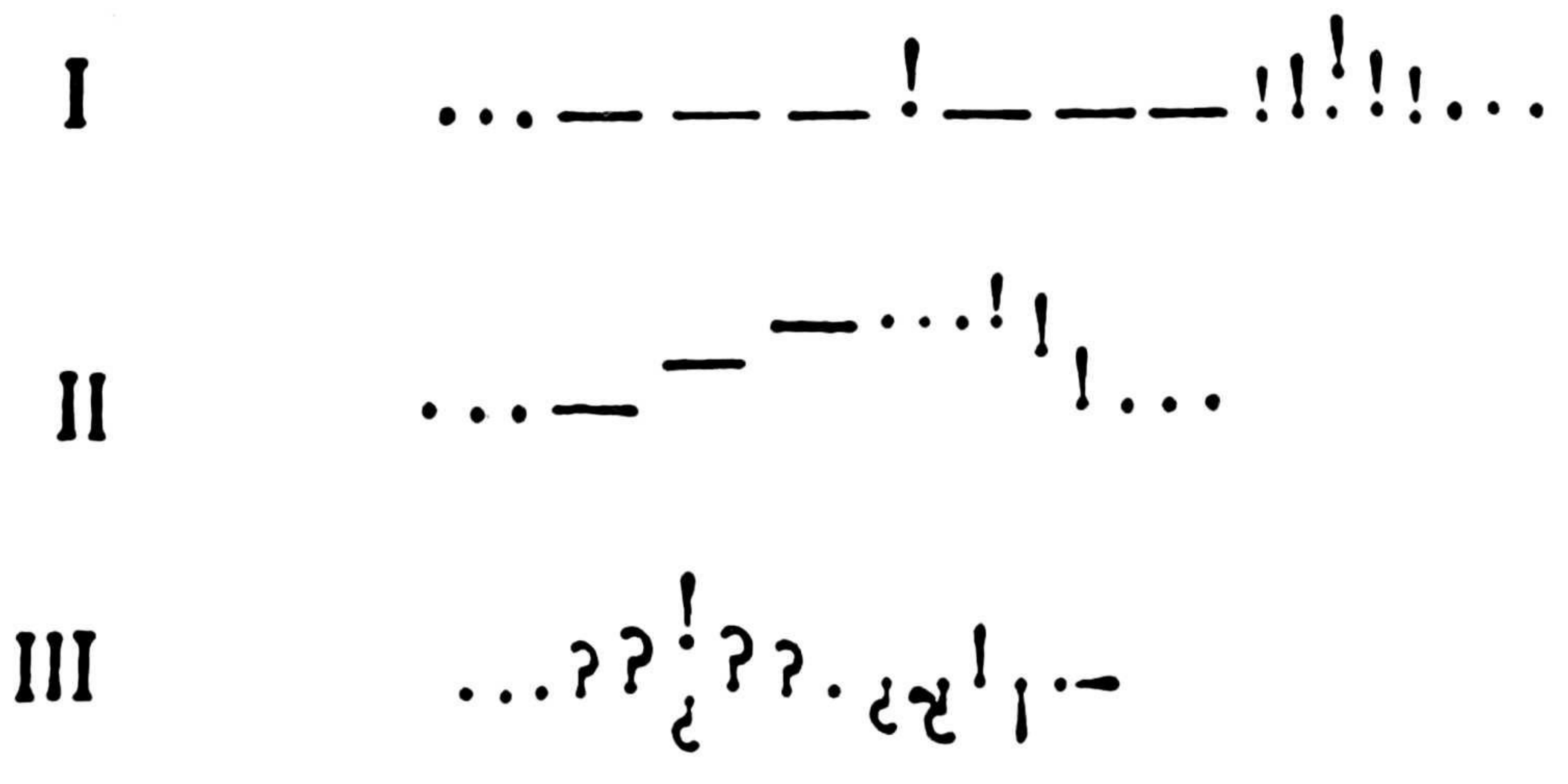
IV (in dissonanten)

U' J— m' n'
U J— m' n'
V– F— K' Q'
F' V– Q' K'
X' Q' V' W'
X' Q' W V
U' J– m– n—
g'
A– O– P' B'
A– O– P' B'
D– T– O' E–
d t o e
O' E'
B' D'
Z' C S B P D
j

Jan Nepomucen Miller

Like his Dutch counterpart van Doesburg, Miller (from Poland) was an advocate of universalism and a pan-arts abstractionism. Among his books are Bez kropki nad "i" *(1964) on poetry and cybernetics, and* Na krzywej przemian *(1973) on humanism, literature, and politics. In 1922 he wrote an article on "The Poetry of Punctuation Marks," suggesting that such works (as in the example given here) "would stand on the border of poetry, painting and the graphic arts." Miller's proposition* displaces *language altogether, as distinct from the* erasure *of Carl Fredrik Reutersward's* Prix Nobel *(1960), a work consisting solely of punctuation marks. Reutersward contends that punctuation in semantic contexts neutralizes the punctuation marks (the colon does not refer to a colon concept, as the concept is already given syntactically, which the ":" merely marks); but he sees an "interesting alternative: not to ignore syntax but certainly to forego 'the preserved meanings of others.' The 'absence' that occurs is not mute. For want of 'governing concepts' punctuation marks lose their neutral value. They begin to speak an unuttered language out of that already expressed. This cannot help producing a 'colon concept' in you, a need of exclamation, of pauses, of periods, of parentheses."*

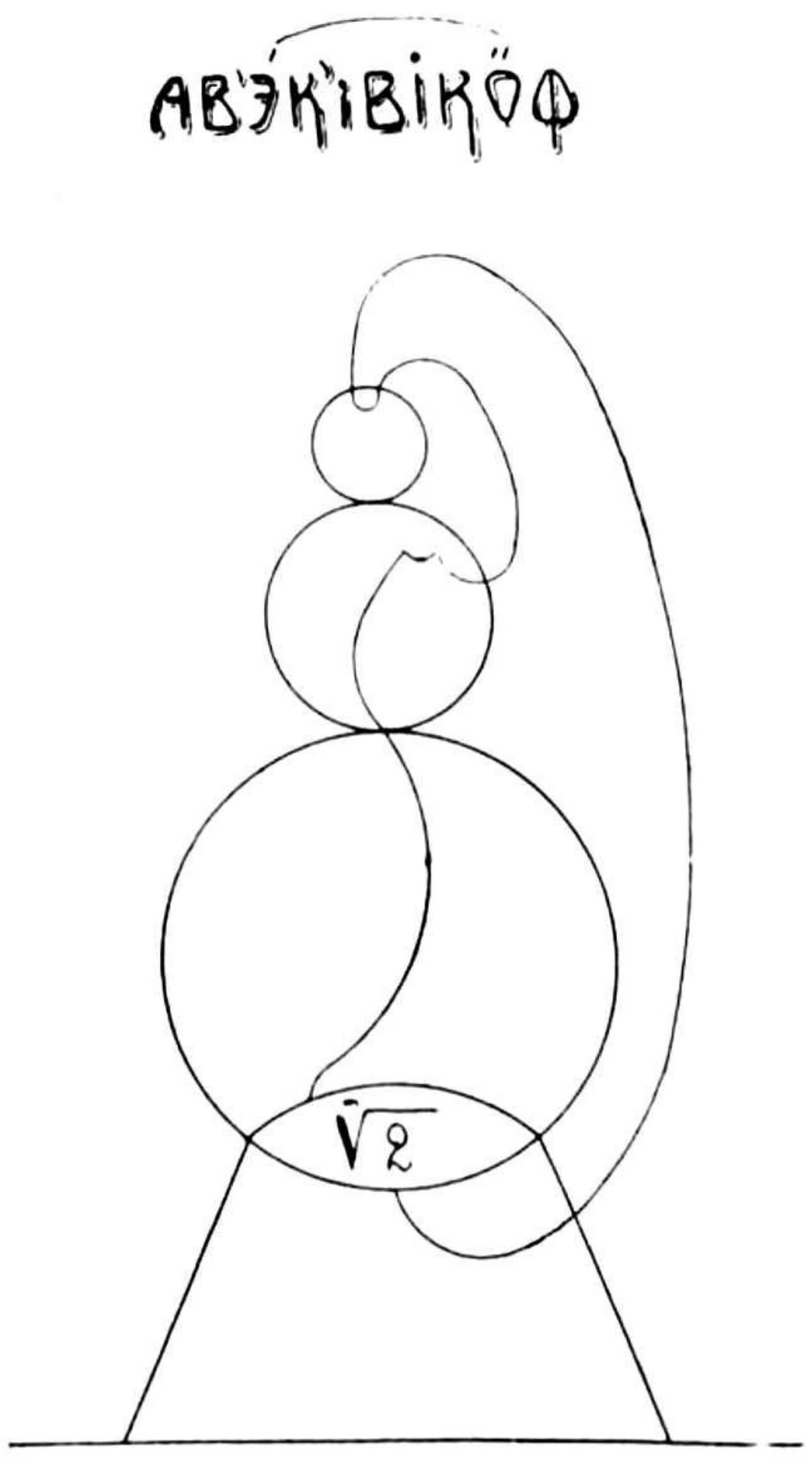
Punctuation Poem

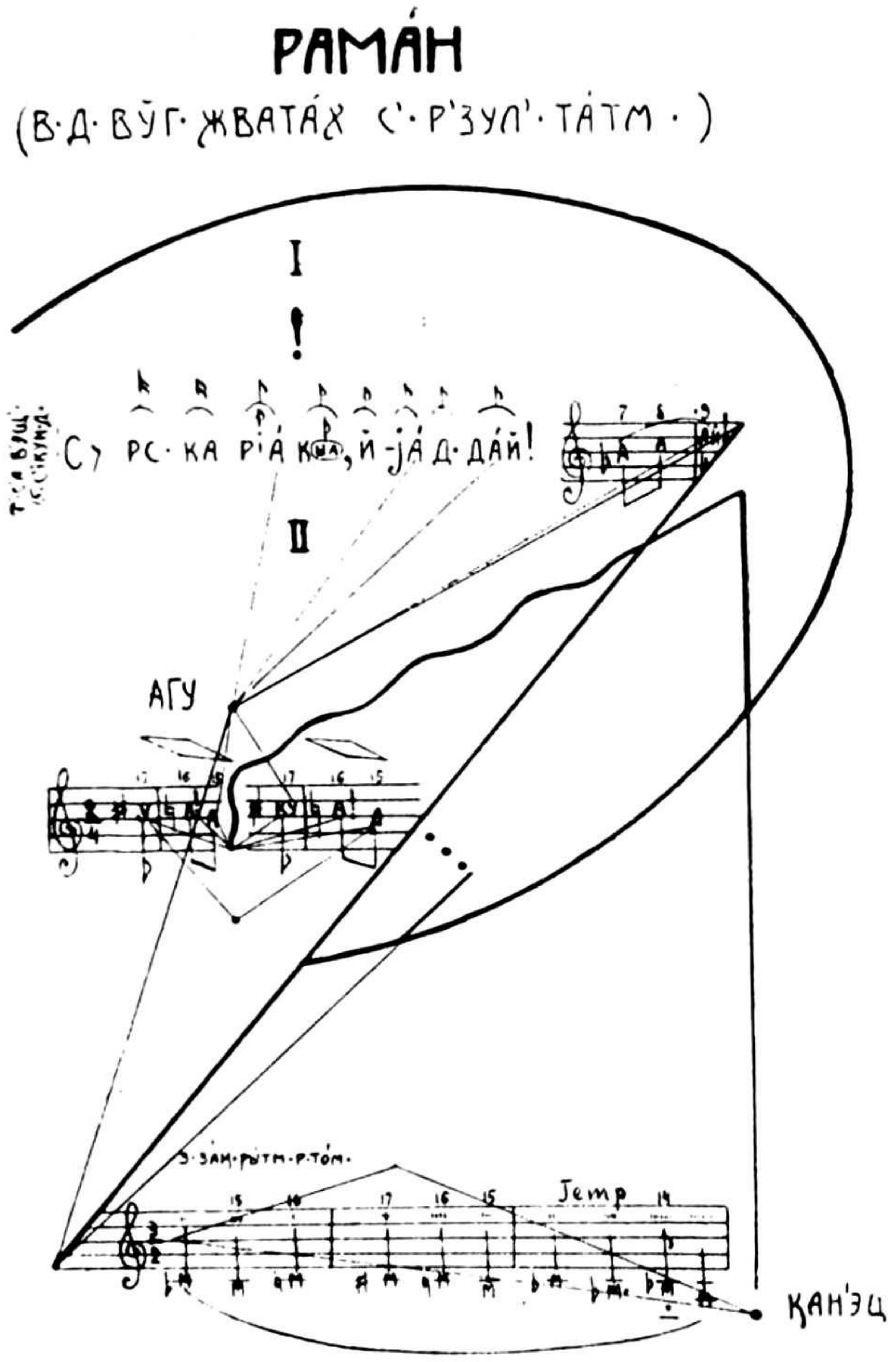


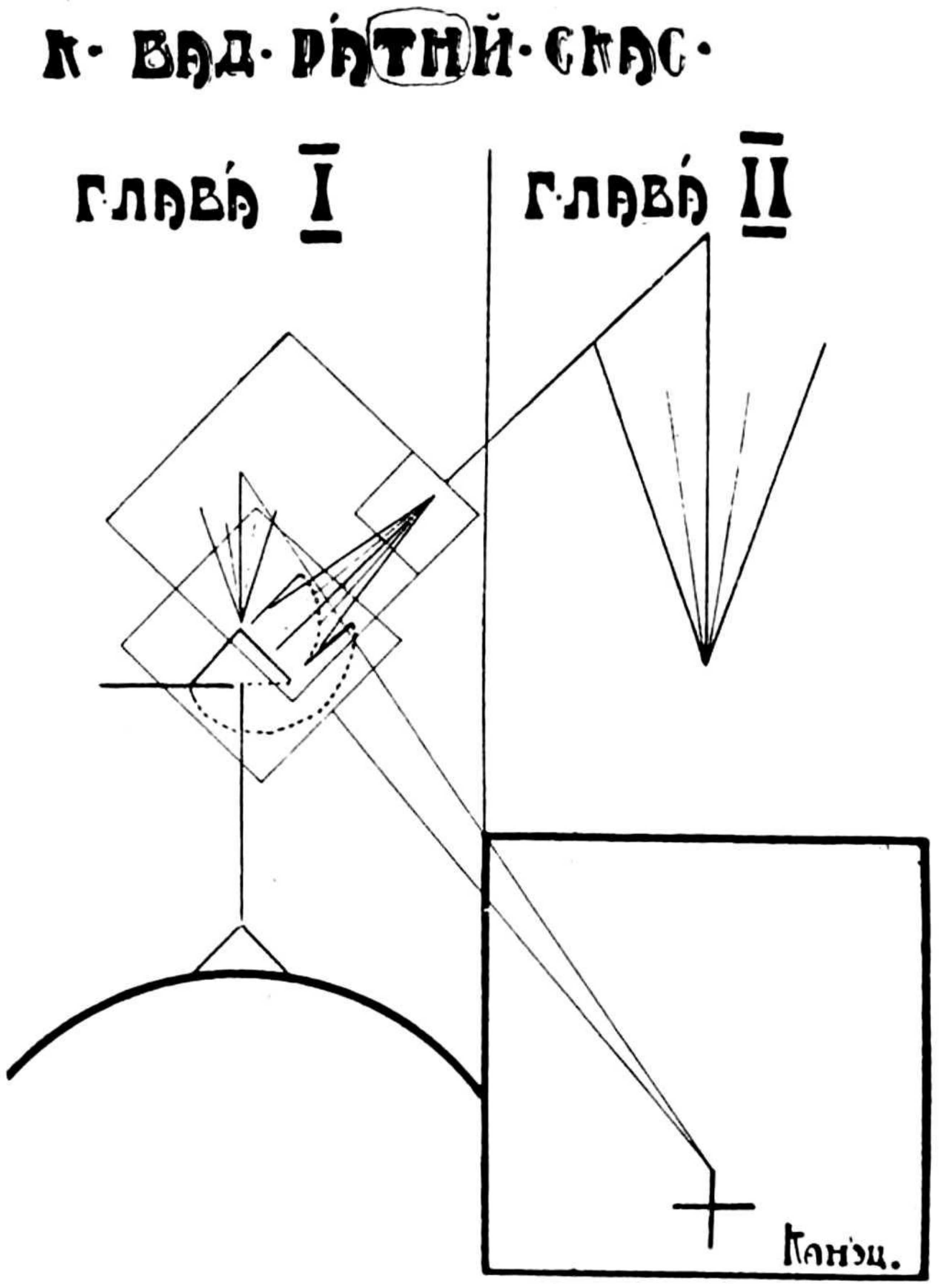
A. N. Chicherin

In "The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry" Ernest Fenollosa writes: "In all poetry a word is like a sun, with its corona and chromosphere; words crowd upon words, and enwrap each other in their luminous envelopes until sentences become clear, continuous light-bands." The poems in Russian poet A. N. Chicherin's Change of All *(1924) seem the virtual incarnation of chromospheric "light-bands." In the preface, K. L. Zelinsky calls Chicherin a pure Constructivist, whose work "knows only one law: the shortest distance between two points."* Change of All *begins with meticulous cues for vocalization, but the poems themselves begin to shed words until pronunciation is beside the point in the examples included here. The piece with musical staves is titled "Novel (in two stomachs with result)," with a designated performance time of fifteen seconds. Part I would appear to mean something like "With an unbender give poison, oh!"; Part II includes a baby's cry, a sliding M sound "with closed mouth," followed by "The End." The text resembling one of Malevich's Suprematist paintings indicates a Part I and a Part II and The End, and is titled "Quadratic Skaz"—probably in reference to El Lissitzky's visual text "Suprematist Skaz About Two Squares." The piece resembling a snowman (rivaling Wallace Stevens's famous "The Snow Man" who, "nothing himself, beholds / Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is") declares in its enigmatic title "unto ages of ages."*

From *Change of All*




РАМÁН
(В·Д·ВУГ·ЖВАТÁХ С'·Р'ЗУЛ'·ТÁТМ·)
I
!
С У РС·КА РÍА КМА, Й-JÁ Д·ДÁЙ!
II
АГУ
З·ЗАМ·РЫТН·Р·ТÓМ·
Jemp
КАН'ЭЦ


К·ВАД·РÁТНЙ·СКАС·
Г·ЛАВÁ I
Г·ЛАВÁ II
КАН'ЭЦ.

From *Change of All*

transition

transition *was edited by Eugene Jolas, an American raised in Alsace, whose trilingualism is reflected in his own writings (English, French, and German) as well as in the cosmopolitanism of the journal. It was the last of the great vanguard vehicles of high modernism, running from 1927 to 1938; but it was the only one (at least of such scale and durability) explicitly devoted to the avant-garde. Its belated inauguration meant that* transition *had a faintly archival feel, positioning contributors' work amidst presentations of key materials (textual and visual) from Symbolism, Futurism, Expressionism, Imagism, Dada, and Surrealism (the only one of these movements contemporaneous with* transition*). But* transition *was too eclectic to reflect a mere doctrinaire assent to vanguard groupings.*[1] *The two most prominent contributors, Gertrude Stein*[2] *and James Joyce, were conspicuously unaffiliated; and programmatic tendencies were diffused by a combination of collage editing and Jolas's idiosyncratic themes. Issue 27, for instance, included Dada poems by Arp, a portion of Breton's* Mad Love, *an installment from Joyce's "Work in Progress" (*Finnegans Wake*), a translation of Kafka's "Metamorphosis," selections from Kandinsky's innovative 1912 volume of poems* Klänge *(Sounds), Hölderlin's poem "The Titans," a fragment of Anaïs Nin's "House of Incest," miscellaneous writings by Samuel Beckett, Kay Boyle, William Saroyan, Philippe Soupault, Henry Miller, Michel Leiris, and others; responses to an "Inquiry into the Spirit and Language of Night" by Sherwood Anderson, Kenneth Burke, T. S. Eliot, Mike Gold, Ernest Hemingway, Robinson Jeffers, and others; and visual work by numerous artists including Arp, Ernst, Kandinsky, Klee, Siqueiros, and Vantongerloo. Besides the authors included below, elsewhere in* Imagining Language *are numerous other contributors to* transition, *including Stein, Ball, Schwitters, Huidobro, Aragon, Desnos, Ernst, van Doesburg, and Leiris.*

Jolas retrospectively described transition *as "a workshop of the intercontinental spirit, a proving ground of the new literature, a laboratory for poetic experiment." Contributors hailed from some twenty countries, by Jolas's count. He had a penchant for organizing symposia on such topics as "The Malady of Language," "Revolution of the Word," and "Dreams and the Chthonian Mind"; and in later issues there was an increasing emphasis on "Paramyth" and "Vertigralism." Jolas's neologisms reflect his absorption in the linguistic fecundity of Joyce's work (and, it should be noted, Jolas coined the term "magic realism" long before it was popularized by Latin American fiction): "Needless to say," Jolas reflected, "our bellwether in the neologistic pilgrimage was James Joyce." Seventeen installments of "Work in Progress"—the title* Finnegans Wake *was Joyce's secret until publication of the book in 1939—were published in* transition. *For literary historians it has been convenient to think of* transition *as a vehicle for this most extreme of modern literary productions; but while the presence of "Work* *in Progress" provided a focal point and a sense of continuity, it is important to recognize the prodigality of texts and contexts Jolas provided.*

Apart from Joyce, our selections avoid the better-known contributors to transition. *Like Jolas, A. Lincoln Gillespie (1895–1950), Harry Crosby (1898–1929), and Bob Brown (1886–1959) were all members of the expatriate American community in France. They give a vivid sense of the intensity as well as the playful ingenuity of* transition. *Although unrealized as a practical invention, Brown's vision of a reading machine is a clairvoyant realization of the world of CD-ROM, personal computers, and microfilm. In his poetry collection* Words *Brown envisions its advantages:*

In the reading-machine future
Say by 1950
All magnum opuses
Will be etched on the
Heads of pins
Not retched into
Three volume classics
By pin heads

In addition to its vanguardism, transition *performed an archival service—as in the presentation of* The Seeress of Prevorst *by Justinus Kerner (1845; original German, 1829), which documents a German case of trance language. Kerner's visionary spoke of a numerologically potent inner language as the remnant of an antediluvian world soul—a view comparable to some of the texts in the sections "Divinities and Aliens" (Part Two), in which we reproduce one of Kerner's diagrams of the "inner script" (p. 151), and "Cosmology" (Part Four) below. While much of the vanguard activity subsumed under "Words in Freedom" was Futurist by temperament—which is to say, derisive of lingering Symbolist aestheticism—Jolas's own brand of Futurism was ecstatic, romantic, and unabashedly mystical.*

Our selection from Joyce is from the fifth chapter of part one of Finnegans Wake *(the draft installment of which appeared in* transition *5, August 1927). The legendary opacity of the* Wake's *language will be evident, but a squinty reading can make out documents, envelopes, letters, texts, scripts—the "loot of learning"—and even a description of the Book of Kells. At the center of the episode is a hen scratching open a letter in a compost heap, a letter apparently containing compromising evidence (incriminating testimony being one of the grand motifs of the* Wake *overall). Any proto-narrative aspect of the* Wake *is subordinated to its manifestly epic ambition, which is the production of a polyglot* interlingua, *a massive reservoir from which all languages derive and into which they ultimately return, much as the river Liffey (personified by Anna Livia) closes the book as it runs back out to sea, its "languo of flows" resolved in "the site of salvocean."*

1 A brief taxonomy of writers and artists published there: Symbolism (Blok), Futurism (Marinetti, Boccioni), Cubism (Picasso, Braque, Gris), Fauvism (Matisse), Expressionism (Trakl, Benn, Sternheim, Lasker-Schuler, Stramm), Suprematism (Malevich), Blue Rider (Kandinsky), Dada (Ball, Tzara, Huelsenbeck, Arp, Schwitters, Grosz, Picabia), Surrealism (Breton, Aragon, Eluard, Desnos, Soupault, Ribemont-Dessaignes, Péret, Prévert, Artaud, Ernst, Man Ray, Masson, Tanguy, de Chirico), De Stijl (van Doesburg, Mondrian), Imagism (H.D.), Bauhaus and Constructivism (Lissitzky, Klee, Gabo, Kandinsky, Moholy-Nagy), Objectivism (Zukofsky), The Fugitives (Tate, Riding). Yet even these terminological nets fail to account for a legion of others, including Rilke, Kafka, Döblin, Roussel, Perse, Queneau, Michaux, Beckett, Leiris, Svevo, Alberti, Ungaretti, Huidobro, Carpentier, W. C. Williams, Hart Crane, Yvor Winters, Dylan Thomas, Henry Miller, Katherine Anne Porter, James Agee, Muriel Rukeyser, and numerous figures from the "expatriate" Left Bank community such as Hemingway, Kay Boyle, Robert McAlmon, Djuna Barnes, Malcolm Cowley, Harry Crosby; Léger, Joseph Stella, Sheeler, Miró, Giacometti; Calder, Moore, Nicholson; Cartier-Bresson, Weston, Brassaï, Modotti; and filmmaker Eisenstein. There were essays as well by a range of figures, including Jung, Frobenius, Buber, Mencken, Panofsky, Ogden, and Read.

2 In an early *transition* essay on "The New Barbarism, and Gertrude Stein," Laura Riding clarified Stein's supposed automatism: "She uses language automatically to record pure, ultimate obviousness. She makes it capable of direct communication not by caricaturing language in its present stage—attacking decadence with decadence—but by purging it of its discredited experiences. None of the words Miss Stein uses have ever had any experience. They are no older than her use of them."

James Joyce

From *Finnegans Wake*

These ruled barriers along which the traced words, run, march, halt, walk, stumble at doubtful points, stumble up again in comparative safety seem to have been drawn first of all in a pretty checker with lampblack and blackthorn. Such crossing is antechristian of course, but the use of the homeborn shillelagh as an aid to calligraphy shows a distinct advance from savagery to barbarism. It is seriously believed by some that the intention may have been geodetic, or, in the view of the cannier, domestic economical. But by writing thithaways end to end and turning, turning and end to end hithaways writing and with lines of litters slittering up and louds of latters slettering down, the old semetomyplace and jupetbackagain from tham Let Rise till Hum Lit. Sleep, where in the waste is the wisdom?

Another point, in addition to the original sand, pounce powder, drunkard paper or soft rag used (any vet or inhanger in ous sot's social can see the seen for seemself, a wee ftofty od room, the cheery spluttered on the one karrig, a darka disheen of voos from Dalbania, any gotsquantity of racky, a portogal and some buk setting out on the sofer, you remember the sort of softball sucker motru used to tell us when we were all biribiyas or nippies and messas) it has acquired accretions of terricious matter whilst loitering in the past. The teatimestained terminal (say not the tag, mummer, or our show's a failure!) is a cosy little brown study all to oneself and, whether it be thumbprint, mademark or just a poor trait of the artless, its importance in establishing the identities in the writer complexus (for if the hand was one, the minds of active and agitated were more than so) will be best appreciated by never forgetting that both before and after the battle of the Boyne it was a habit not to sign letters always. Tip. And it is surely a lesser ignorance to write a word with every consonant too few than to add all too many. The end? Say it with missiles then and thus arabesque the page. You have your cup of scalding Souchong, your taper's waxen drop, your cat's paw, the clove or coffinnail you chewed or champed as you worded it, your lark in clear air. So why, pray, sign anything as long as every word, letter, penstroke, paperspace is a perfect signature of its own?

. . .

Because, Soferim Bebel, if it goes to that, (and dormerwindow gossip will cry it from the housetops no surelier than the writing on the wall will hue it to the mod of men that mote in the main street) every person, place and thing in the chaosmos of Alle anyway connected with the gobblydumped turkey was moving and changing every part of the time: the travelling inkhorn (possibly pot), the hare and turtle pen and paper, the continually more and less intermisunderstanding minds of the anticollaborators, the as time went on as it will variously inflected, differently pronounced, otherwise spelled, changeably meaning vocable scriptsigns. No, so holp me Petault, it is not a miseffectual whyacinthinous riot of blots and blurs and bars and balls and hoops and wriggles and juxtaposed jottings linked by spurts of speed: it only looks as like it as damn it; and, sure, we ought really to rest thankful that at this deleteful hour of dungflies dawning we have even a written on with dried ink scrap of paper at all to show for ourselves, tare it or leaf it, (and we are lufted to ourselves as the soulfisher when he led the cat out of the bout) after all that we lost and plundered of it even to the hidmost coignings of the earth and all it has gone through and by all means, after a good ground kiss to Terracussa and for wars luck our lefftoff's flung over our home homoplate, cling to it as with drowning hands, hoping against hope all the while that, by the light of philophosy, (and may she never folsage us!) things will begin to clear up a bit one way or another within the next quarrel of an hour and be hanged to them as ten to one they will too, please the pigs, as they ought to categorically, as, strictly between ourselves, there is a limit to all things so this will never do.

For, with that farmfrow's foul flair for that flayfell foxfetor, (the calamite's columitas calling for calamitous calamitance) who that scrutinising marvels at those indignant whiplooplashes; those so prudently bolted or blocked rounds; the touching reminiscence of an incompletet trail or dropped final; a round thousand whirligig glorioles, prefaced by (alas!) now illegible airy plumeflights, all tiberiously ambiembellishing the initials majuscule of Earwicker: the meant to be baffling chrismon trilithon sign ᗰ, finally called after some his hes hecitency Hec, which, moved contrawatchwise, represents his title in sigla as the smaller △, fontly called following a certain change of state of grace of nature alp or delta, when single, stands for or tautologically stands beside the consort: (though for that matter, since we have heard from Cathay cyrcles how the hen is not mirely a tick or two after the first fifth fourth of the second eighth twelfth — siangchang hongkong sansheneul — but yirely the other and thirtieth of the ninth from the twentieth, our own vulgar 432 and 1132 irrespectively, why not take the former for a village inn, the latter for an upsidown bridge, a multiplication marking for crossroads ahead, which you like pothook for the family gibbet, their old fourwheedler for the bucker's field, a tea anyway for a tryst someday, and his onesidemissing for an allblind alley leading to an Irish plot in the Champ de Mors, not?) the steady monologuy of the interiors; the pardonable confusion for which some blame the cudgel and more blame the soot but unthanks to which the pees with their caps awry are quite as often as not taken for kews with their tails in their or are quite as often as not taken for pews with their tails in their mouths, thence your pristopher polombos, hence our Kat Kresbyterians; the curt witty wotty dashes never quite just right at the trim trite truth letter; the sudden spluttered petulance of some capItalIsed mIddle; a word as cunningly hidden in its maze of confused drapery as a fieldmouse in a nest of coloured ribbons: that absurdly bullsfooted bee declaring with an even plainer dummpshow than does the mute commoner with us how hard a thing it is to mpe mporn a gentlerman: and look at this prepronominal *funferal,* engraved and retouched and edgewiped and puddenpadded, very like a whale's egg farced with pemmican, as were it sentenced to be nuzzled over a full trillion times for ever and a night till his noddle sink or swim by that ideal reader suffering from an ideal insomnia: all those red raddled obeli cayennepeppercast over the text, calling unnecessary attention to errors, omissions, repetitions and misalignments: that (probably local or personal) variant *maggers* for the more generally accepted *majesty* which is but a trifle and yet may quietly amuse: those superciliouslooking crisscrossed Greek ees awkwardlike perched there and here out of date like sick owls hawked back to Athens: and the geegees too, jesuistically formed at first but afterwards genuflected aggrily toewards the occident: the Ostrogothic kakography affected for certain phrases of Etruscan stabletalk and, in short, the learning betrayed at almost every line's end: the headstrength (at least eleven men of thirtytwo palfrycraft) revealed by a constant labour to make a ghimel pass through the eye of an iota: this, for instance, utterly unexpected sinistrogyric return to one peculiar sore point in the past; those throne open doubleyous (of an early muddy terranean origin whether man chooses to damn them agglutinatively loo — too — blue — face — ache or illvoodawpeehole or, kants koorts, topplefouls) seated with such flopright-down determination and reminding uus ineluctably of nature at her naturalest while that fretful fidget eff, the hornful digamma of your bornabarbar, rarely heard now save when falling from the unfashionable lipsus of some hetarosexual (used always in two boldfaced print types — one of them as wrongheaded as his Claudian brother, is it worth while interrupting to say? — throughout the papyrus as the revise mark) stalks all over the page, broods Ⅎ sensationseeking an idea, amid the verbiage, gaunt, stands dejectedly in the diapered window margin, with its basque of bayleaves all aflutter about its forksfrogs, paces with a frown, jerking to and fro, flinging phrases here, there, or returns inhibited, with some half-halted suggestion, Ⱡ, dragging its shoestring; the curious warning sign before our protoparent's *ipsissima verba* (a very pure nondescript, by the way, sometimes a palmtailed otter, more often the arbutus fruitflowerleaf of the cainapple) which paleographers call *a leak in the thatch* or *the Aranman ingperwhis through the hole of his hat,* indicating that the words which follow may be taken in any order desired, hole of Aran man the hat through the whispering his ho (here keen again and begin again to make soundsense and sensesound kin again); those haughtypitched disdotted aiches easily of the rariest inasdroll as most of the jaywalking eyes we do plough into halve, unconnected, principial, medial or final, always jims in the jam, sahib, as pipless as threadworms: the innocent exhibitionism of those frank yet capricious underlinings: that strange exotic serpentine, since so properly banished from our scripture, about as freakwing a wetterhand now as to see a rightheaded ladywhite don a corkhorse, which, in its invincible insolence ever longer more and of more morosity, seems to uncoil spirally and swell lacertinelazily before our eyes under pressure of the writer's hand; the ungainly musicianlessness so painted in sculpting selfsounder ah ha as blackartful as a *podatus* and dumbfounder oh ho oaproariose as ten canons in skelterfugue: the studious omission of year number and era name from the date, the one and only time when our copyist seems at least to have grasped the beauty of restraint; the lubricitous conjugation of the last with the first: the gipsy mating of a grand stylish gravedigging with secondbest buns (an interpolation: these munchables occur only in the Bootherbrowth family of MSS., Bb — Cod IV, Pap II, Brek XI, Lun III, Dinn XVII, Sup XXX, Fullup M D C X C: the scholiast has hungrily misheard a deadman's toller as a muffinbell): the four shortened ampersands under which we can glypse at and feel for ourselves across all those rushyears the warm soft short pants of the quickscribbler: the vocative lapse from which it begins and the accusative hole in which it ends itself; the aphasia of that heroic agony of recalling a once loved number leading slip by slipper to a general amnesia of misnomering one's own: next those ars, rrrr! those ars all bellical, the highpriest's hieroglyph of kettletom and oddsbones, wrasted redhandedly from our hallowed rubric prayer for truce with booty, *O'Remus pro Romulo,* and rudely from the fane's pinnacle tossed down by porter to within an aim's ace of their quatrain of rubyjets among Those Who arse without the Temple nor since Roe's Distillery burn'd have quaff'd Night's firefill'd Cup But jig jog jug as Day the Dicebox Throws, whang, loyal six I lead, out wi'yer heart's bluid, blast ye, and there she's for you, sir, whang her, the fine ooman, rouge to her lobster locks, the rossy, whang, God and O'Mara has it with his ruddy old

Villain Rufus, wait, whang, God and you're another he hasn't for there's my spoil five of spuds's trumps, whang, whack on his pigsking's Kisser for him, K.M. O'Mara where are you?; then (coming over to the left aisle corner down) the cruciform postscript from which three *basia* or shorter and smaller *oscula* have been overcarefully scraped away, plainly inspiring the tenebrous *Tunc* page of the Book of Kells (and then it need not be lost sight of that there are exactly three squads of candidates for the crucian rose awaiting their turn in the marginal panels of Columkiller, chugged in their three ballotboxes, then set apart for such hanging committees, where two was enough for anyone, starting with old Matthew himself, as he with great distinction said then just as since then people speaking have fallen into the custom, when speaking to a person, of saying two is company when the third person is the person darkly spoken of, and then that last labiolingual *basium* might be read as a *suavium* if whoever the embracer then was wrote with a tongue in his (or perhaps her) cheek as the case may have been then) and the fatal droopadwindle slope of the blamed scrawl, a sure sign of imperfectible moral blindness; the toomuchness, the fartoomanyness of all those fourlegged ems: and why spell dear god with a big thick dhee (why, O why, O why?): the cut and dry aks and wise form of the semifinal; and, eighteenthly or twentyfourthly, but at least, thank Maurice, lastly when all is zed and done, the penelopean patience of its last paraphe, a colophon of no fewer than seven hundred and thirtytwo strokes tailed by a leaping lasso — who thus at all this marvelling but will press on hotly to see the vaulting feminine libido of those interbranching ogham sex upandinsweeps sternly controlled and easily repersuaded by the uniform matteroffactness of a meandering male fist?

A. Lincoln Gillespie, Jr.

Voks

(1) Ah! — FEM, ReceptAffabil, SymbExcusMerit of Lethargy, HARP, ITALY,
grassGREEN.
(2) Oh! — ripe-happy, — 'cause-guiding MASC; Selforge-Imperessonality,
HORNS, SPAIN, ORANGE.
(3) Ooh! — delishfright, huddleDebecstacy, NEGROES, FLUTE, BROWN.
(4) Eh! — stridemetalcrash glass, coldseer-penetrinsist, NORWAY, INKBLUE,
CORNET.
(5) Eeh! — squeakassure spoiled-child, approbaconfi, FIFE, Categoric, psychophys-
RidRiggle from Lyrnew, SILVER, nonFrance CHINA.
(6) Uh! — snailDisapprob, grunt of flat surfaces, Subconscesse of MidRegisters,
(putt) BASSOON, ESQUIMAUX, mustardYELLOW.
(7) Ooh! — BassEsse, Wonderment's rounded lips, ENGLISHORN, GERMANY,
(put) heavyunctVaseline, OCHRE.
(8) Ih! — Hypothetic, evaneswhisp, delicanick Satire, pursueRemotIdeal, FEM-
(hit) DecoyVanish, VIOLINuanceIdio, INDIA, LAVENDER.
(9) Eh! — BRITISHubconschInvoice (the conschposed ResiduVowel of Short-
(met) hand), coolness of steady gentle breeze atop hill, the loco-fatalised Edu-
cate, KOREA, SITAR, almGREYN.
(10) Oy! — Humor, haftexplorealm twixt Go (o) dWill & Logiseriousness, edge-
spilling piecrust, the pleasure of a Surprise, the catch-one-off-guard-ly
Realising a Hope, ZITHER, SEMITIC, PINK&PURPLE.
(11) Owh! — HurtLearnSlide, ToothPowderThought, BanjoMettle, HUNGARY,
CLARINET, WHITEGOLD.
(12) Awh! — Earth, thresolution of Ash into Personality, PuzzCredule, mouthmush-
Assim of Ultra-Modern art, TROMBONE, SWEDEN, DRAB-
COLORS.
(13) Alt! — raspcontinu-socialty, brackDissillusion, Charcoal of REED-Instruments,
refine-whisper-velvet, FRANCE, BLUEBLACK.
(14) ehyeh! — U.S. pioneer-diphthontrenches in T.B.M.-ultbdrawl EvStress, Wot-GO-
DO-now Impatience, knifigorIndividuality lollmoming with wane-
VoltAgress toward dutystupor, CELLO-TryRegistDeclaim, muddied
BrightBLUE.

[Eugene Jolas]

transition's Revolution of the Word Dictionary

NEOLOGISMS:
constatation (James Joyce) . . . . . statement of a concrete fact.
couchmare (James Joyce) . . . . . nightmare . . cauchemar . . .
mielodorous (James Joyce) . . . . . honeyed emphasis of odorous
Dance McCaper (James Joyce) . . . an Irish *danse macabre*
returningties (James Joyce) . . . . . eternities . . . cycles turning upon themselves . . . the serpent that bites its own tail
Besterfarther Zeuts (James Joyce) . . . . . the Proustian divinity . . . Cronos . . . Saturn . . . who bests us all; in other words: Grandfather Time—here Zeuts suggests both Zeus and Zeit, German for 'time'.
paideuma (Leo Frobenius) . . . . . ensemble of psychic forces governing a civilization . . . soul of a culture.
mechany (Leo Frobenius) . . . . . state of mechanical civilization
tocsinsong (Whit Burnett) . . . . . shrill chant.
barytonate (Murray Godwin) . . . . . warble like a baritone
up (American language) . . . . . to increase
clutterpile (Murray Godwin) . . . . . pile up in disorder
oor (Eugene Jolas) . . . . . primal . . . as oor-man
gump (Sidney Smith) . . . . . a foolish person
megalopolitan (Charles Duff) . . . . . big-mouthed person
readie (Bob Brown) . . . . . machine for reading
flir (Theo Rutra) . . . . . to glitter
turbil (Eugene Jolas) . . . . . to rush like a storm
floom (Eugene Jolas) . . . . . to suddenly appear silhouetted.
jawgape (A. L. Gillespie Jr.) . . . . . stare with surprise
parloritis (A. L. Gillespie Jr.) . . . . . tendency to academism
erotoxin (Stuart Gilbert) . . . . . vampish woman
expatriarch (Stuart Gilbert) . . . . . an ancient rejuvenated
wordling (Laurence Vail) . . . . . writer exclusively interested in words
mythoracle (Laurence Vail) . . . . . pseudo-pythian spouter
idiosyncrazie (Jack Lait) . . . . . silly caprice
meanie (New York tabloids) . . . . . villain in divorce suit

to gross (Rialto slang) . . . . . to be financially successful

anamyth (Eugene Jolas) . . . . . a fantastic narrative that reflects preconscious relationships

psychograph (Eugene Jolas) . . . . . a prose text that expresses hallucinations and phantoms

sicker (Ludwig Lewisohn) . . . . to trickle.

WORDS TO BE RETIRED FROM ACTIVE SERVICE:

pattern (literary)
romanticism
classicism
humanism
democracy
republicanism
liberalism
nightingale

Harry Crosby

Crosby (1898–1929) was editor of Black Sun Press in Paris, which, in addition to his own early books, published work by Hart Crane, D. H. Lawrence, and Archibald MacLeish. Crosby's formally innovative writings include experiments in concrete poetry and nonliterary found texts such as stock reports and racing charts. For two decades prior to his suicide, he developed a solar preoccupation evident in the piece below.

Short Introduction to the Word

1)

Take the word Sun which burns permanently in my brain. It has accuracy and alacrity. It is monomaniac in its intensity. It is a continual flash of insight. It is the marriage of Invulnerability with Yes, of the Red Wolf with the Gold Bumblebee, of Madness with Rā

2)

Birdileaves, Goldabbits, Fingertoes, Auroramor, Barbarifire, Parabolaw, Peaglecock, Lovegown, Nombrilomane

3)

I understand certain words to be single and by themselves and deriving from no other words as for instance the word I

4)

I believe that certain physical changes in the brain result in a given word—this word having the distinguished characteristic of unreality being born neither as a result of connotation nor of conscious endeavor: Starlash

5)

There is the automatic word as for instance with me the word Sorceress ; when the word goes on even while my attention is focused on entirely different subjects just as in swimming my arms and legs go on automatically even when my attention is focused on subjects entirely different from swimming such as witchcraft for instance or the Sorceress

6)

A nursery game called Hunt-the-Slipper. A flower called Lady-Slipper. Running in the Gold Cup a horse called Slipper. Drinking champagne out of Her Red Slipper. From these magic sources the development of the word Slipper in my mind so that it becomes the word internal and therefore as much a part of me as my eyes or feet.

7)

Honorificabilitudinity, Incircunscriptibleness, Antidisestablishment-Arians.

8)

The evolution of a word in the mind requires despotic power and unlimited elimination. How could Yes for instance flourish among words such as dog or corset or safety-pin or hot-water-bag or eunuch.

Bob Brown

The Readies

The word "readies" suggests to me a moving type spectacle, reading at the speed rate of the day with the aid of a machine, a method of enjoying literature in a manner as up-to-date as the lively talkies. In selecting "The Readies" as title for what I have to say about modern reading and writing I hope to catch the reader in a receptive progressive mood, I ask him to forget for the moment the existing medievalism of the BOOK (God bless it, it's staggering on its last leg and about to fall) as a conveyor of reading matter, I request the reader to fix his mental eye for a moment on the ever-present future and contemplate a reading machine which will revitalize this interest in the Optical Art of Writing.

In our aeroplane age radio is rushing in television, tomorrow it will be a commonplace. All the arts are having their faces lifted, painting (the moderns), sculpture (Brancusi), music (Antheil), architecture (zoning law), drama (Strange Interlude), dancing (just look around you tonight) writing (Joyce, Stein, Cummings, Hemingway, *transition*). Only the reading half of Literature lags behind, stays old-fashioned, frumpish, beskirted. Present-day reading methods are as cumbersome as they were in the time of Caxton and Jimmy-the-Ink. Though we have advanced from Gutenberg's movable type through the linotype and monotype to photo-composing we still consult the book in its original form as the only oracular means we know for carrying the word mystically to the eye. Writing has been bottled up in books since the start. It is time to pull out the stopper.

To continue reading at today's speed I must have a machine. A simple reading machine which I can carry or move around and attach to any old electric light plug and read hundred thousand word novels in ten minutes if I want to, and I want to. A machine as handy as a portable phonograph, typewriter or radio, compact, minute, operated by electricity, the printing done microscopically by the new photographic process on a transparent tough tissue roll which carries the contents of a book and is no bigger than a typewriter ribbon, a roll like a miniature serpentine that can be put in a pill box. This reading film unrolls beneath a narrow magnifying glass four or five inches long set in a reading slit, the glass brings up the otherwise unreadable type to comfortable reading size, and the reader is rid at last of the cumbersome book, the inconvenience of holding its bulk, turning its pages, keeping them clean, jiggling his weary eyes back and forth in the awkward pursuit of words from the upper left hand corner to the lower right, all over the vast confusing reading surface of a page.

Extracting the dainty reading roll from its pill box container the reader slips it smoothly into its slot in the machine, sets the speed regulator, turns on the electric current and the whole, 100,000; 200,000; 300,000 or million words, spills out before his eyes and rolls on restfully or restlessly as he wills, in one continuous line of type, its meaning accelerated by the natural celerity of the eye and mind (which today are quicker than the hand); one moving line of type before the eye, not blurred by the presence of lines above and below as they are confusingly placed on a columned page.

My machine is equipped with controls so the reading record can be turned back or shot ahead, a chapter reread or the happy ending anticipated. The magnifying glass is so set that it can be moved nearer to or farther from the type, so the reader may browse in 6 points, 8, 10, 12, 16 or any size that suits him. Many books remain unread today owing to the unsuitable size of type in which they are printed. A number of readers cannot stand the strain of small type and other intellectual prowlers are offended by Great Primer. The reading machine allows free choice in type-point, it is not a fixed arbitrary bound object but an adaptable carrier of flexible, flowing reading matter. Master-compositors have impressed upon apprentices for years that there is no rubber type. Well, now that the reading machine exists with a strong glass to expand or contract the size of letters, compositors can't ding on that anymore.

The machine is equipped with all modern improvements. By pressing a button the roll slows down so an interesting part can be read leisurely, over and over again if need be, or by speeding up, a dozen books can be skimmed through in an afternoon without soiling the fingers or losing a dust wrapper. Taken at high gear ordinary literature may be absorbed at the rate of full length novels in half hours or great pieces of writing may be reread in half lifetimes. The underlying principle of reading remains unaffected, merely its scope is enlarged and its latent possibilities pointed.

To save the labor of changing rolls or records, a clip of a dozen assorted may be put in at one time and automatically fed to the machine as phonograph discs are changed at present. The Book of the Day or Book of the Hour Club could sell its output in clips of a dozen ready to slip into the reading machine. Maybe a book club called the Dozen A Day would result. Reading by machinery will be as simple and painless as shaving with a Schick razor and refills could be had at corner drug stores or telephone booths from dawn to midnight.

With the present speeding up of publishing a machine is needed to handle the bulk and cut down the quantity of paper, ink, binding and manual labor wasted in getting out massive books.

The material advantages of my reading machine are obvious, paper saving by condensation and elimination of waste margin space which alone takes up a fifth or a sixth of the bulk of the present-day book. Ink saving in proportion, a much smaller surface needs to be covered, the magnifying glass multiplies the ink at no additional cost, the ratio is one part ink to ten parts magnifier. Binding will be unnecessary, paper pill boxes are produced at a fraction of the cost of cloth cases. Manual labor will be minimized. Reading will be cheap and independent of advertising which today carries the cost of the cheap reading matter purveyed exclusively in the interests of the advertiser.

All that is needed to modernize reading is a little imagination and a high powered magnifying glass. The Lord's Prayer has been printed in type an inch high with illuminated initials as long as your nose and bound in plush in elephantine folios ; also it has been etched on the head of a pin. Personally I should have been better pleased if Anthony Trollope had etched his three volume classics on the head of a pin. Maybe no more trilogies will be written when Readies are the vogue. Anyway, if they are, they may be read at one sitting.

By photographic composition, which is rapidly taking the place of antiquated methods, type since 1925 has been turned out which is not readable without the aid of a magnifying glass. The English August-Hunter Camera Composing Machine fired the first gun in this revolution five years ago. Experiments with diamond type, like the old Chiswick Press Shakespeare Complete in one and miniature books of the 64mo Clubs have already shown what a multitude of words can be printed in a minimum of space and yet be readable to the naked eye. Even Cicero mentioned having seen a copy of the Iliad no bigger than a fingernail. Publishers of our day have perfected Oxford Bibles and compressed all of the short stories of De Maupassant into one volume by using thin paper. Dumb, inarticulate efforts have been made for centuries to squeeze more reading matter into less space; but the only hint I have found of Moving Reading is in the title of Stephen Crane's "Black Riders," which suggests the dash of inky words at full gallop across the plains of pure white pages. Roger Babson recently listed the needed invention of a Talking Book in a list of a dozen ways to make a million. But he missed the point. What's needed is a Bookless Book and certainly a silent one, because reading is for the eye and the INNER Ear. Literature is essentially Optical — not Vocal. Primarily, written words stand distinct from spoken ones as a colorful medium of Optical Art.

Reading is intrinsically for the eye, but not necessarily for the naked optic alone. Sight can be comfortably clothed in an enlarging lens and the light on a moving tape-line of words may be adjusted to personal taste in intensity and tint, so the eye may be soothed and civilized, and eventually become ashamed of its former nakedness.

Already we are familiar with news and advertisements reeling off before our eyes in huge illuminated letters from the tops of corner buildings, and smaller propaganda machines tick off tales of commercial prowess before our eyes in shop windows. All that is needed is to bring the electric street signs down to the ground, move the show-window reading device into the library by reducing the size of the letter photographically and refining it to the need of an intimate, handy, rapid reading conveyor.

In New York a retired Admiral by the name of Fiske has patents on a hand reading machine which sells for a dollar; it is used in reading microscopic type through a lens. Admiral Fiske states: "I find that it is entirely feasible, by suitable photographic or other process, to reduce a two and one-half inch column of typewritten or printed matter to a column one-quarter of an inch wide, so that by arranging five of such columns side by side and on both sides of a paper tape, which need not have a width greater than one and one-half inches, it becomes possible to present one hundred thousand words, the length of an average book, on a tape slightly longer than forty inches."

Recently the company that publishes the New York telephone book, because of the alarming increase in the ponderosity of its tomes, considered the idea of using the Fiske machine and printing its product, advertisements and all, in pages three inches tall, in microscopic type. The idea is excellent and eventually will force its way into universal acceptance because the present bulk of phone directories can hardly be expanded unless rooms and booths are enlarged. The inconvenience of searching through the massive volumes of several boroughs has brought New York to the necessity of giving birth to an invention.

But book me no books. In the Fiske Machine we have still with us the preposterous page and the fixity of columns. It is stationary, static, antiquated already before its acceptance.

The accumulating pressure of reading and writing alone will budge type into motion, force it to flow over the column, off the page, out of the book where it has snoozed in apathetic contentment for half a thousand years. The only apparent change the amateur reader may bemoan is that he cannot fall asleep as promptly before a spinning reading roll as he can over a droning book in his lap, but again necessity may come to the rescue with a radio attachment which will shut off the current and automatically stop the type-flow on receipt of the first sensitive vibration of a snore.

Revolutionize reading and the Revolution of the

Word is inklessly achieved. There have been rumbling of word battles from Rabelais and Shakespeare through the inarticulate arm-waving time of Whitman to the deafening present. Creative writers have searched for new forms of word communication, methods of greeting more mental and aesthetic than dogs continue to employ so unimaginatively. Bawling creative Babes in the Word continue the struggle to shatter the filmy caul they were born with and get at the rosy nourishing nipples of their mother, the Sphinx-like Reader. Manifestos have been broadcast in all tongues in all times, dating from the one God issued at the Tower of Babble, which carries on today in the Unknown Tongue by which Holy Rollers commune. Maybe when we lift our creative writing heads too high again through the unexpected outlet of the Reading Machine God will come along and pie the type and we'll have to begin all over again. But until then let's be busy at our Tower.

The machine by its very existence makes a need of new words and deletes some worn-out ones. The hackneyed typewriter key-test of "Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their party" can be expressed with more interesting optical effect "Nowtime goodmen comeaid their party." No educated reading eye of this age catches the little, useless, conventional conjunctions, articles, prefixes, suffixes, etc. unless they are needed for emphasis. The up-to-date eye scarcely sees the "thes," "ands," "buts," "tos," "fors," "fromits," but picks out the meaty nouns and verbs and only qualifying words so placed as to assume importance. Useless, unimportant sentence-encumberers will be skipped and never moving missed at all by the eager eye in its excitement at witnessing a type spectacle, a READIE, performing before its Mind's Vision and the sensitive Inner Ear.

Already there is a tendency to do away with quotes in the French fashion and useless capital letters at the beginning of columns of poetry. All modern movements toward more effective simplicity are in the same sure direction, even the poet laureate of word-bound England at the end of his life has done his bit to loosen up the language. Let's see words machinewise, let the useless ones drop out and the fresh Spring pansy ones pop up.

Without any whirr or splutter writing is readable at the speed of the day — 1930 — not 1450, without being broken by conventional columns, confined to pages and pickled in books, a READIE runs on before the eye continuously — on forever in–a–single–line–I–see–1450–invention–movable–type–Gutenberg–Wynkyn–de–Worde–Jimmy–the–Caxton–though–Chinese–centuries–before–printed–thousand–page–books–on–silk–leaves——furnished–by–local–silk–worms–no–two–leaves–tinted–alike—printing–from–dainty–porcelain–type–same–stuff–makes–teacups——dreams———Shakespeare–bending–over–workbench–making–language–laboriously——bellowing–blacksmith–turning–out–grotesqueries–at–forge–all–onhisown–to–keep–UP–interest–in–job——Spenstream–of–lusty–steamy–bigfisted–word–moulders–flit–by———Rabelais–BenJonson–DanDefoe–Sterne–WaltWhitman–GertStein–JimJoyce———Stephen–Crane's–Black–Riders———Crash–by–hell–bent–for–leather–uppercase–LOWERCASE–both–together–chanting–valorously–Print–in–action–at–longlast–moveable-type–at–breakneck–gallop———Carl–Sandburg–flashes–through–daredevil–commaless–Cossack–astride–mustang–bronco–vocabulary–leaning–farout–into–inky–night–picking–up–carefully–placed–phrases–with–flashing–Afric–teeth———Myself–I–see–motherfather–newscope–Optical–Writers–running–round–rims–rhythmically–Eye–Writers–writing–endless–lines–for–reading–machines–more–

optical–mental–more–colorful–readable–than–books——simple–foolproof–Readie–Machine–conveying–breathless–type–to–eager–eyereaders–tickling–Inner–ears–dumping–Inner–Ear–eyefuls–of–writer–right–before–receptive–ocular–brainportals–bringing–closer–hugging–readerwriter–now–there–is–more–mental–necking–radio–reaction–television–readievision–going–on–more–moving–reading–more–moving–writing.

The above is neither telegraphese nor a stab at writing modernly. It is but a crude attempt to convey the optical continuity of reading matter as it appears spinning past the eye out of a word-machine. It is hampered by the connecting hyphens and columns and lacks MOTION, the one essential of the new reading principle.

With written matter moving before the eyes new forms of expression will develop naturally, and surely more expressive ones, at least a technical eye-lingo of the Readie will result. The eye refreshed will ask for more, bawl for occasional tickling eye-Bawl, even tinted paper could be used to help along the flow of words and thoughts; and surely colored lighting effects on the reading tape.

Useless words will go out for a long walk and never come back into the reading language again, they will just walk out, drop out, dim out, fade out — OUT. Writing will recover its earlier naiveté, its Rabelaisian, Shakespearean charm, its art quality; our reading vocabulary will be circumcised and circumscissiled. For the first time in the History of mental optics there will exist a visual Literary Language sharply separated from the Speaking Tongue. Literary language is Optical, speaking language Vocal, and the gap between them must spread till it becomes a gulf. My reading machine will serve as a wedge. Makers of words will be born; fresh, vital eye-words will wink out of dull, dismal, drooling type at startled smug readers. New methods crave new matter; conventional word-prejudices will be automatically overcome, from necessity reading-writing will spring full-blown into being. The Revolution of the Word will be won. Reading-writing will be produced not so much for its sonorific sleep-producing qualities as for its mental-eye-provoking pleasures.

I have lived with five hundred years of printed books and have felt the same papyrus that Nebuchadnezzar might have touched, and all this time I have lived in loving wonder, a great want-to-know about words, their here and their there, their this and their that, and the most efficacious manner of administering the written word to the patient. The monks in the beginning didn't do it so badly in their illuminated manuscripts, they retained a little of the healthy hieroglyphic, all Oriental books in ideogramatic character are delights, early colophons splendid. But what have we got in this machine age, only Bruce Rogers and waste-baskets full of glittering comely type to make into beautifully commonplace words which can't tell us much more than the labored chisellings of the stone age, beautiful but dumb books as clumsy in their way as the Rozetti Stone.

Let's let writing out of books, give it a chance and see what it does with its liberty. Maybe there are butterflies in the core of those cloth-cased cocoons stacked away in libraries. Let's let them out and have a look. With reading words freely conveyed maybe books will become as rare as horses after the advent of the auto, perhaps they will be maintained only for personal pleasure or traditional show, as the gorgeously-trapped brewery steeds of Munich.

Let's look for literary renaissance through the Readie; a modern, moving, word spectacle. Let's have a new reading medium in time with our day, so that industrious delvers in the Word-Pile may be rapidly read and quickly understood by their own generation at least.

The Readies are no more unusual than the Talkies, and not a scratch on television. As soon as the reading machine becomes a daily necessity certainly it will be out of date. Pocket reading machines will be the vogue then; reading matter probably will be radioed and words recorded directly on the palpitating ether. But the endless imaginative possibilities of the new medium need not lead us astray. The low-brows are presently revelling in their Movies and Talkies while the almost extinct high-brow is content to sit at home sipping his thin alphabet soup out of archaic volumes of columns, mewling a little like a puling baby taking mush from the tip of an awkward wooden spoon too gross for his musical rose-buddy temperamental mouth.

Those Mental Obfuscates who can't make out the Readies on the dim literary horizon of the day will be the first to accept them as a commonplace tomorrow and they will be the loudest in grumbling if anything happens to the Readie mechanism to interrupt the eager optical wordflow as for as much as a *billimeter-augenblick.*

Marius Lyle

Scheme for Physical Improvement of Writers' Medium

spaces, capitals, stops, margins, signs *and* pace have their significance in the make-up of a writer's medium.
Now that the value of each letter no less than each word is beginning to be gauged the real sway of scribbler's signs ought to be accurately shaped
with the coming of the incoherent technique of modern reading matter this is especially necessary
too long have we been the slaves of atavistic printers & public publishers & readers

CONSPUEZ les CONVENANCES

WRITERS why don't you revolt?
(mais que ça soit non seulement une révolte mais une véritable révolution)

consider each letter how it is to stand high or sit low or lie prostrate how each word is to hang aloft lonely as a star or attached (courante as a piece of BACH S) prominent or spectral a counterblast a prognostic or an aftermath = a fragrance left over the sound of them their taste their look. Their feel how they feel to the paper may be
a new method of
printing will have to be invented so as to give the letters *and* the words (different psychics with uncountable different origins tempers reactions the word reacting *to* the letter or *against* them subservient or masterful spurning them chasing them holding them in check) their own individual inbeing liberating one confining another letting them play or carouse or abstain or have fits or wail or adore or break themselves on the wheel or just drift
for the medium as well as the craftsman the MAXIM is "REBEL"

rebel

REBEL REBEL

REBEL

LEBER

REBEL

SPACES: I   want   e   d   tosay
I w   ant   ed   to   s   a y
Iw   an   te   dto   sa   y
I   wa   n   te   dt   o   say
(the illustration is perfect)

are   you   awake?   NO
A r r r R e   you   a   w   ake?   no
ar   ey   oua   wa   a   ake?   no
(whispered)   a a are   y   o   ua   w a a a   ke?   no

SNORE !!!
(3 snores are here clearly shown   they can be heard on the page)

CAPITALS: the hurts we get from unimaginative publishers and their crew is shattering. in connection with these majestic letters in England it is the mode to use them for:

a) days of the week
b) months
c) adj. of nationalities (other than english even)
d) names of places, people, titles, 1st letter in sentence,
pronouns complementary to divinity, abstract terms
and I daresay in many other thoughtless ways

where capitals are aesthetically theoretically scientifically psychologically dynamically moodily humouristically satisfying they are austerely ignored
(Extract from my last work)

How the place STank! pavements DUST passers-BY REfuse HEAPED on the OUTskirts of the LITtle town a RAnk world motors HONKing and whirrinG FEET on the pavEment WHeels of drAYs FActory wHistleS Steam lOrries VoiceS dOgs YAPPing YAp YaPPing: hurting SoundS so many   SeS =   esses

RYTHM as well as   EMPhasis is trapped by means of this simple technique. soon (it can't be long) capitals of every size or shape . . . . romanesque   baroque   gothic rococo   chinese indian will be as overflowing as the people of every nation as various then the page will have its own character saucy aloof winning cruel.

STOPS: joyce has successfully experimented with their abolition for the moment spaces can be used

MARGINS: a clause relating to some SPecial perSonality or SUbject or ideA is aesthetically emphaSized or STimulated by widening the margin take the wiFE whenever She comeS in the margins might be widened from 1/2 to 1 in. for the child especially if it is a diSaSter to 2 ins. for the dog leave only 1 in. of printing.

or again:

the man gets 1/2 in. his houSe 1 1/2 in. his ideas 3 in. in a 4 3/4 in. wide page this SCheme gives a motif quite as effective as the muSical ones in opera

SIGNS: they can be produced ad. infin. with immenSe effect outSide the mathematical signs for character or SCenic deScription there are the peculiar ones invented by the writer which will inStantly SuggeSt themSelves to any live imagination

Ex: Smells heavy narcotic = Smudged black printing

eluSive SCents = wild roSe would be indicated by a faint italic type

vigorouS activity such aS a whipping boy with top brawl in Street would be made offenSive by irregular rather dirty printing ending in very heavy **gothic type**

(PACE:) i have suggested the tempo in my latest but one by means of musical signs let into the margin *MAESTOSO ACel°. cresc* < *app. dim morendo.* & so on the entire meaning of a work may be misconstrued if read too fast or too slow.

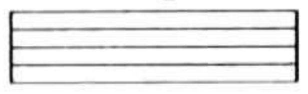
it is not necessary i imagine to hint to the intelligentsia of "Transition" how trenchantly we can uSe musical terms

MUSICAL SIGNS: when dealing with PERSONS GENDERS ORGANS . . . . .

a LIVER may be *accel°. presto largo* a WIfe *fff* or hysterically *tremolando* a BABY *pizz°.* or *Sf°. piano sfp sfz.p.* the MOTHER *ad lib. allarg°.*

the entire DRAMA could exist by nothing but musical signs The dram. pers. being explained for the enlightenment of ♭♭s in the same way as playwrights indicate on fly leaf

EX: ♭ = husband i.e. flat
× = wife i.e. double sharp
♮ = former mistress i.e. natural.
animato = aero pilotin (chief character in plot) i.e. with soul

pizzicato = babe
8va = daughter i.e. ottava
ppp = wife's pretended lover i.e. very very dim or soft
Mus^{l} SIGNS : S : = cellaret or nearest american bar (the excursions to or from which would
con^{d} as naturally be: AL Segno dal segno)
DRAMA: 7th = the joint production of ♭ and × i.e. septet
6th = " " " " ♭ and *an°* or ♮ (query?) best expressed by Schumann's WARUM?
A tempo = dinner hour or bedtime ff in italics = rate of motion
 = staff i.e. remainder of servants not immediately concerned in plot.
the logic takes place as follows:
MAESTOSO: ♭ on lower G < *fff* (the < means not only increasing volume of tone but also size of paunch also advancing years and general unbuttonedness)

breves *semibreves* *minums* *gs* & *g flats* = his outraged dignity
adagio = his senility i.e. brain & motions speech & up-take SLOW
mez°. Sop°. = dull flat uninterested populace
white notes = mob
black " = individuals
cresc°. = upward flight of aeroplane
dim. = brakes of motor
affret°. = years " "
tremolando = stars
DA CAPO = planets i.e. from the beginning
all play their role in the drama

the *PAUSE* is used extensively

repetitions spaces refrains // the flight of the aero is indicated by these 3. the tonic chord denoting the start the dominant the flight. the 7th. a turn over in mid air the 11th a crash the 13th annihilation.

VIVACE: X on uppermost FX *tremolo accel°. // pizz°.*: from next room *animato ad lib.* Shoots in from crashing airplane through window crying: *Coco* (indicating to return to proper pitch) *A tem* = she arrives in time.

Ottava Bassa falls through ceiling onto her head (*bassa* is added when she displeases *alta* when she is agreable)

♮ restores a note which has been raised by the sharp to its original pitch (peculiarly applicable to ♭ & ×
animato on *F*♮ *G*♮ hums *TASTO SOLO* i.e. a direction to play a part in unison.
DIM°.
PIAN°.   *AL SEGNO*
DA   *CAPO*: means of course ♭'s return to majestic ineptitudes.
FINE
nobody listens

Justinus Kerner

The Inner Language

While half-awake, Frau H frequently spoke a language which seemed to resemble an oriental tongue. In a condition between waking and sleeping she said that this language was innate in her, and that it was similar to the one spoken in the days of Jacob; in fact, that a similar tongue was innate in every human being. This language, she said, lies in the inner numbers of man; with her (since these were her inner numbers) in the numbers ten and seventeen. From these there emerges writing with numbers, because writing and numbers are always connected with each other. Thus her numbers ten and seventeen, she said, were at the same time basic words for the outer and inner life.

This language was extremely sonorous. She remained entirely logical in her expressions for that which she wanted to say, so that those who were with her for some time, gradually learned to understand her. She often said that she could express in this language her innermost emotions, and whenever she wanted to say something in German, she would first have to translate it from this, her inner language. But she did not think this language with her head; and although she used it in the ordinary way, she said it was not a language of the head, but of the inner life, one which came from the depths of the heart. Therefore, she was only able to pronounce with difficulty names, titles etc., which she did not find in that language, and in these instances she had to use the numbers that went into the outer world, into which she translated those words.

She was able to speak and write this language only in a condition of half-awakedness, and when she was awake she knew nothing whatever about it. Also, only while writing, did she know the meaning of those words. She always remained, however, quite logical while writing them.

If a word for something happened to emerge in this language without there being an inner impulse, whenever someone asked her about it, she would have to examine the thing first, whereupon the word became released. Then she said, "In this word there are now values and qualities of this thing which are not to be found in the common word." In this inner language of hers, she also gave names to persons, and in these names there were combined the value and qualities of the person. Thus, for instance, the name *Emelachan,* meant to her: "Your spirit is tranquil and silent, your soul is delicate, your flesh and blood are strong, both easily roar like the waves of the sea, then gentleness speaks in you: come and be calm."

Indeed, philologists found here and there in this language words which resembled coptic, arabic and hebraic words. The word *Elschaddai* which she frequently used for God, means in Hebraic the Self-sufficient one, or the Omnipotent. The word *dalmachan* seems to be arabic. The colloquial expression, *bianachli,* which she was able to pronounce only in her "life-ring", and which she translated in her "sun-ring" with a feeling of loathing, means in Hebraic "I am sighing".

I add a few more words and colloquial expressions from this, her inner language: *Handacadi*—physician. *Alentana*—woman. *Chlann*—glass. *Schmado*—moon. *Nohin*—no. *Nochiane*—nightingale. *Bianna fina*—many coloured flower. *Moi*—how. *Toï*—what. *O pasqua non ti bjat handacadi*—will you please give me your hand, Doctor. *O mia criss*—I am. *O mia da*—I have. *Un*—two. *Jo*—hundred. *Quin*—thirty. *Bona finto girro*—please go away. *Girro danin chado*—please stay here. *Optini poga*—you must sleep. *Mo li orato*—I am resting. *O minio pachadastin*—I have fallen asleep. *Posi anin cotta*—the ring is filling up. *Elohim Majda Djonem*—This she used for an amulet.

The letters of this language were not always connected in her mind with numbers. She said, "If I want to write this language without expressing thereby something deeper, something that concerns me very profoundly, I write it without signs of numbers, but in that case, I need longer words and need to make more little hooks. The word for which I do not put a number sign is of less significance to me; to be sure it expresses the word, but without a deeper meaning. God without number signs means simply God to me, but with number signs it expresses to me the entire being of God, it becomes illuminated by the numbers, as it were. I am being led into His depths. The numbers without letter symbols are really more sacred to me than the words; however, one does not need a number for less important things, but for the most perfect rendering of it I have to use the letter symbols in connection with the numbers."

She was unable to give a complete A.B.C. of this language. She said as follows: Often a single letter was also an entire word. Each letter, however, was at the same time a number to her, only another and less important one, which had to be increased by others placed above or below it. Frequently in her condition of half-awakedness she said that the spirits spoke a similar language, in fact she had several times spoken with them against her will as this language threw her into a somnambulistic state. She said further, while entirely in a condition of sleeping and waking: "Although the spirits read thoughts and have no need for language, yet this language belongs to the soul, the soul carries it into the other world, because the soul rules man and forms his body over there. They always speak it only according to their spiritual potency: for over there, too, things go by degrees. This language passes over with the soul and forms a soaring body for the spirit."

Translated from the German by Eugene Jolas.

Eugene Jolas

Workshop

The art of expression is suffering from a paralysis that is one of the symptoms of a civilization in collapse. It struggles for its autonomy against the sociological flood. On every side we are belaboured with the question: How can the artist of the word continue his search, when the misery of humanity is without parallel in history, when wars and catastrophes threaten everywhere, when the destruction of world capitalism is the only task that should occupy him?

. . . He is not a reformer. He does not preach ethics. He does not aid in a religious revival. The creative can never be bound by political frontiers. It is never concerned with being "left-wing" or "right-wing." It is by its very nature syncretistic. It takes life as a totality. It lives it and expresses it. It blends the unconscious and conscious, the mythic and historic, the individual and the collective, into a superconscious reality.

The new human type that is emerging as an *élite* is not dominated by environmental changes, social revolutions or chiliastic conceits, but by the explosive force of an inner mutation that may very well run parallel with the social mutation, but is hardly caused by it. It seems to me that we are witnessing the slow emergence of a new creative personality.

. . . He seeks the law of totality. He seeks a *restitutio in pristinum.* He develops whatever embryonic mystical faculties he may have. He lets new perceptions inundate him. He watches in himself the efflorescence of extra-normal states of consciousness. Or better: he redevelops in himself ancient and mutilated sensibilities that have an analogy with those used in the mythological-magical mode of thought in the primitive man, with prophetic revelations, with orphic mysteries, with mystic theology such as that of Dionysius Areopagita, with the Kaballa, Tao, Hindoo philosophy, with Egyptian wisdom, with gnostic rapture, with mantic experiences like those of Van Roesbroeck, Boehme, Master Eckhardt, St. John of the Cross, with the attitude of the early romantics, with the mental habits still extant in folklore and fairy tales, with clairvoyance, clairaudience, day and night dreaming, even with sub-human or psychotic thinking. This attitude to the creator is the antithesis of one that believes in the primarily conscious genesis of creation. The two attitudes are best represented in the antipodes: Mallarmé and Rimbaud, Hoelderlin and Goethe. Yet we know that the identification of the "poet" with the vates or seer has always existed. Novalis and Rimbaud were at one in postulating this union. It is only in periods of "enlightenment" and positivism that the tendency has been temporarily buried. (This is what was happening until the war.) Yet it emerged again and again explosively after each period had run its course. The new creator builds the bridge between the two attitudes of the unconscious inspiration and the superconscious creation: the line passes from irrationalism to a transcendental superlogic. I believe that we stand today at the threshold of a new flowering of this spirit: the resurrection of the vertical attitude towards life.

. . . We feel that we are living in a mental climate that, in its collective alienation and apocalyptic mood, resembles the one in which romanticism flowered in the beginning of the last century. We cannot forget that our interest in the night-side of life is identical with that manifested by the romantic thinkers and seers. They were the first to emphasize the importance to the creator of irrationalism, of the dream and the day-dream, of mysticism and mythos. The preoccupation with the dream, especially, haunted all romantics from Coleridge to Nerval, to Petrus Borel, to Novalis, to Tieck, to Jean Paul. They considered it an integral element of the "novel" and of "poetry," after Goethe, strange to say, had led the way by being the first to use the dream as part of his anecdote in *Wilhelm Meister.* They regarded it as the principal aesthetic organon. They identified it with the fairy story. They interpreted the symbols through metaphysical categories.

We feel a relationship with the aura of that age. But that is as far as we go. We are through with its forms of expression, with its language, with its style. The period of the "lyric" and "poem" is definitely over. The world of sonnets, ballads, octaves, elegies, odes, is over. The "poem" with its narcissism, descriptions of the *milieu,* paeans of land and loam, lovesick whines, melodramatic anecdotes of bloodlust and incest, hellenic parallelisms, propaganda of "living issues," little individual aches and troubles, cynically objective naturalism, is liquidated. A new style is in the making that will present the inner and outer reality in a synthesis; that will present the dramatic unity of "body and soul"; that will be *subobjective.* New forms to present the identity of the ancestral world and the present world will have to be found; epic word-symphonies will have to be discovered; an inter-racial language will have to be forged to express the collective inner vision of mankind. The "poem" must change into a *mantic compost* which organizes the expanding consciousness of "the expanding universe." It will go parallel with science which is no longer afraid of intuition, which is joining the ideations of mystics and seers, which has discovered the cosmic ray as the confirmation of the gnostic pneuma, which has annihilated three-dimensional space. The *mantic compost* will be the expression of the noumenal reality, the super and interplanetary cosmos, the dynamis of a new imagination.

The chief need for the expression of this inner mutation is a new art of the word. We need a new plastic word composition that has nothing to do with the pedantry of modern philology, or the sterile dogmas of "estheticism." It is related to the existential, to anthropology, to depth-psychology, to metaphysics.

The artist of the word who participates in this process of inner metamorphosis attempts to forge language into a mantic instrument. In calling for the *language of night* some years ago, I had this in mind as an aim. I expressed a wish-image, a postulate, a nominalistic fiction. I knew this language did not exist today. It existed in the past, it was the Homeric language of the gods, the language of the heroic age of the races, the inner language of the mystics. Poets like Angelus Silesius, St. John of the Cross, Blake, Nerval, Novalis, Francis Thompson wrote in a manner approximating it. So did the anonymous poets who created their hymns in "mystic Latin." Yet we can only use their expression as a base. They did not solve the question. They merely attempted with the means at their disposal to give voice to the inner vision they had. Theirs was the liturgical, hymnic attitude to the word, which is the attitude we should try to recapture today.

The extension of consciousness which modern science places within the zone of possibility today seems to require a new form of expression I noticed in my own linguistic development that the words in my native and acquired tongues were beginning to wear out. Having used creatively the three principal European languages, I saw how in each one of them I was reaching a dead point beyond which there was no use going. In this trilingual difficulty I had no precedent to go by. Creative language, I feel, is sick. A curious muteness lies over it. The nihilistic collapse of the world is mirrored in it. It is inadequate to transmit even the simplest psychic phenomena. There no longer exists any language for our deepest emotions about love and death. The "lyrical" language today is filled with banausic clichés and metaphoric banalities. To the epigones the thematic material is everything. Their language is poisoned by the *déchets* of the utilitarian mind. It suffers from the vacuity of the "little housekeeping words," and from the logic of the conceptualist system. The use of words in what is known as "poetry" occurs through the reflective and conscious hammering of sense-impressions into the objective image. Language has lost the Heraclitean sense of movement.

A new "alchemy" is needed. This has been felt by a few isolated word-artists for the past hundred years, but the full clinical picture of the pathology has been recognized only in the last decade or so. The romantic poets had a presentiment of it. Edgar Allan Poe, now passing through an unjustified eclipse, was struck with it. Lewis Carroll tried to find a solution of his own. Rimbaud had a grandiose vision of the need of "hallucinated words." Mallarmé fought heroically for his own inner language. Marinetti, albeit in a non-metaphysical sense, was the first in this century to open the offensive by making the word autonomous and dynamic. The expressionists and early dadaists, following in his footsteps, made the isolated word anarchic. James Joyce, the greatest word-artist of the age, mirrored his independent vision of the disintegration of language in *Ulysses,* and is now hammering out his own polysynthetic solution, which cannot be imitated.

We are beginning to sense the metaphysics of language again. I envisage the *language of night* as a mediumistic organ, the attempt to cognize the meta-real value of the word and syntax. Here we come face to face with those processes that cannot be sensed with the intellect. For it is the unconscious vision which created language, and we stand before the task of re-discovering the knowledge of the daemonic-magical things that lie hidden in words and have been lost to modern man. This is, I take it, the real significance of Emerson's dictum: "The corruption of man is followed by the corruption of language."

The word was song and liturgy in the beginning of man's verbal expression. The epos existed before the novel. Sagas were recited as litanies. Today's "poetry" has lost this sense of the ancestral rhythm in which the word was considered a *formule magique,* in the literal sense. We have in us the heritage of billions of years of common mutation. The *language of night* does not want to break with the past. Numberless words in every language are eternal, because they carry the weight of mythical experiences with them. The ancient symbols still live, but we have to experience them again and again in order to open the way for other experiences by the liberated imagination. Once there was a language of parables, runes and fairy tales. We no longer understand the fervour with which past epochs employed the *Word.* It was sacred, it was the atman's echo, it was the johannite logos. The ancients felt it contained the inner wonder of the Godhead. It was a means of conjuration and creation. When the Hindoo spoke AUM, the interjection became power through the forty different ways of its pronunciation. The poets of the Veda regarded the word with religious fanaticism, they examined each intonation, and meditated every grammatical and rhythmic relationship. The primitive man—the *homo divinans,* as he has been called—had the same attitude to the word. Among certain tribes in Africa, America and Australia, it is still the custom, on special occasions, to sing in a sacred language handed down from primeval days. In the magical texts of the past there are to be found extraordinary sound-formations that refer to the sacred element of language. These forms of ancient wisdom were transmitted liturgically, they represented enigmatic sigils, they had exorcistic potency. In this alchemy of letters the mythological mind approached the hidden or supernatural powers.

We cannot break with the past, but we cannot return to it either. For language cannot stand still or go back. It is in constant movement and simply carries the symbolic remnants of the past in its stream. It carries with it the phylogenetic mass. The psychic liberation which new discoveries have made possible (eidetic images, the collective unconscious, all the oneiromantic or hermeneutic operations) open up new means of expression. The artist of the word whom these psychic experiences have liberated finds the contact with the mystic seer's view of the world and uses language in its function of *suggestion,* as [Jean] Paulhan has called it. He acquires changed faculties of expression. He is in search of new symbols and sigils, and weds them, in a voluntary arrangement, with ancient words inherited from an ancestral past. He seeks hieroglyphs to express what to many seems the inexpressible. In his process of the mystic metamorphosis of reality, he also metamorphoses the means of representation. The experiences of the *yore-world* vibrate in him, he senses abysmal life through the operations of dreams, diurnal phantasies, hypnogogic hallucinations, visions of rapture. His words themselves become mediumistic. They live a life of their own, like all living organisms. They have the power to create a universe that heretofore existed only as a fiction.

The *language of night* being the total expression of all the material that goes to make up the experiences of the daemonic-cosmic dynamis of the inner world in flux needs a liberty such as the recent literary epochs have denied the creator. The artist of the word having extended his consciousness and created in himself an intuitive apprehension of the invisible world must be free to de-rationalize the language of an intellectualist age. There are two ways of approaching this problem. His temperament may be such as to make him limit himself to a mere *phantasmatic* re-arrangement of his material. In that case, I believe it essential that the irreality he presents should find voice in the mysticism of a *montage in words,* in a *semantic* revolution, in an attempt to dislocate mediumistically all those vocables that have become poisoned by the contact with the empirical reality. He is not bound by the syntactical laws of logic used in the language of communication, although he may use them if his inner vision make it necessary to do so. He is out to create a new syntax: the sentence becomes conjuration. On the other hand, if his temperament be more impatient and if he find many words definitely useless and pathological for the purpose of manifesting the mediumistic experience, he ought to have the right to invent new ones. In this *revolution of the word* he does not forget that he always builds on a language saturated with the ancient mythic symbols. He does not forget that the substratum of the unconscious psyche is identical in all races throughout the world. Age-old magic texts well up from the tertiary memory. Word-images emerge somnambulistically. He makes a "spiritual wedding" of the old and new sigils and thus gives language wings again. His primary aim is the creation of a new *metaphoric* language that might approach the mood of illumination.

In this revolutionary process he does not neglect the collective language as speech. The *language of night* absorbs the language of communication in a metaphorical syncretism. It passes through continents and centuries, through dead and living worlds. The mutation now going on, which is helped dynamically by the new technological means such as the cinema, the radio, and other mechanical forces, is about to create a linguistic interpenetration that will doubtless have its effect on the final morphological process of modern languages. There will be modifications eventually that may kill certain weaker branches and develop new ones. The migrations of peoples since the war have also contributed to this process. I see today a vast intercontinental revolution of language.

The *language of night* I have in mind will make the intercontinental synthesis of the inner and outer language. It may thus become the truly universal language. Not that of the "educated philistine" who demands signs to simplify his world of communication, not an auxiliary language that will never remind him of his solitude, not a quotidian language of gestures that flees from consecration. But a language that will dance and sing, that will be the vision of the "troisième oeil," that will bind the races in a fabulous unity.

One of the steps towards this language is the entrance into the pre-logical. We are still on the threshold to the discovery of an authentic language of the dream.

During a number of years when I attempted to transcribe my dreams verbally, I encountered considerable difficulties. Certain objects of the unconscious world often appeared to me to have no analogy whatever with the objects which they might have resembled in the waking state. They were definitely *new* objects created automatically in the state of sleep, or half-sleep, deformations of well-known objects, synthetizations of them. Since the objects were subjective creations, I felt that naming them objects was a misnomer. I invented the word "subobject" for these phenomena.

In naming them according to approximate correspondences with the objects known in the waking condition, I realized I was making a compromise. For often they were, in fact, *other* objects. I therefore proceeded to invent certain vocables for them. It so happened also that in the dream itself words presented themselves spontaneously to me as pure neologisms. I noticed a selective relationship between the objects and the words. The semantic sense of the dream-words and their sound character determined their interpretation. I saw that the *jeux de mots* in the dream were full of meaning. Behind each new word stood another word, another reality.

I had suggested to myself during the dream, or else I name-invented such words as: Grala, Ascaton, Alzneiwein, Spaenlein, Sickermore, Old Griper, Verstehung, Hiera Ut, Gillabet, Cosmosa, Zweegey-Weegey, Bourgeoisin, Géantade, Grandoloquet, Lussurus, Garillon, Mélodore and numerous others.

During hypnogogic experiences I often caught isolated sounds that I have not been able to explain satisfactorily. Usually they are franco-german sounds that have no relation to anything I have read or heard.

In this subobjective oneiromancy it is important to remember the experiences of the day-dream. We are always dreaming, and it is only the irruption of the outer world of civilization that puts brakes on this process. The night-world of the day-dream has not been studied thoroughly up till now, although the Cooks of psychology are preparing to do so. Here we enter the mutation of the metaphor.

One of the chief faults I have to find with the present art of the word is that it tends to ignore almost completely the daemonic content of language. By this I mean the word that is the reflex of the descent into the mythological world, into the ritual universe. Some years ago, during the infant stages of *transition,* I once spoke of the *diabolical principle* in connection with an analysis of Lautréamont's work.

. . . I am inclined to substitute for the word "diabolical" (which now smacks too much of old-fashioned theology) the more precise term "daemonic," which was first used by Goethe, I believe, to describe that inner dynamics in man denoting the experience of the lower or subhuman forces. Life is a polarity between the subhuman, or daemonic, and the supra-human, or cosmic, an energetical process, in which both principles flee each other and sometimes join. This phenomenon can be traced in every mystic and gnostic philosophy, the Chinese knew it as Yang and Yin, the dualistic Manicheans built a marvellous cosmogony around the idea. Even the Catholic Paschal acolyte says triumphantly: "*O certe necessarium Adam peccatum.*" It is what Bachofen called "*the road to the mothers.*"

In studying the unconscious—my own, of course, for, *n'en déplaise aux collectivistes,* it's the only one I really know well—I came upon certain phenomena that, by dint of repetition, attracted my attention. I found that the dream symbolism was subject to laws that apparently went beyond mere psycho-analytical interpretation. Urged on by the mystic and gnostic writers I was then studying I understood that that material in my dreams was not only non-personal, but definitely related to certain myths or legends I had learned to know in my childhood. There seemed to be a polarity between the daemonic and celestial images. What struck me, as I went on, was that behind the objective images there stood other images. Hidden behind the foreground of the realistic symbols, there apparently was a universe inherited from the ancestors. It was the unconscious of mankind that was revealed.

These dream-beings were mostly phantoms, sometimes also light-beings. Grotesquely masked apparitions, cobold-like creatures, animal-men predominated in these phantasmata and chimerae. I had the impression that my night-world was the playground of the lucifernian and celestial powers, to use the terms of the biblical mythos. The de-personalization I sensed in the dream-state was a kind of schizophrenic phenomenon. I felt that we are split personalities in our dreams, that we are really *being* dreamed, that there are other "I's" in us, that we are like persons possessed.

We have to face these demons and phantoms. What is at stake here is this: the artist of the word who seeks transcendental perceptions cannot hesitate to confront chaos. He must accept it as a necessary step to a higher medial cognition. He must pass willingly through what St. John of the Cross called "the dark night of the soul." Ordinarily men try to ignore these maleficent forces. They live in the cynical belief that their little intellect suffices to approach the immense complexity of the unconscious. To go down into this troubling labyrinth, to descend into the abyss is a catharsis. As I have watched these phenomena, I have tried to transcribe the conflict in words. This presented itself to me as an exorcistic process, the redemption from the larval power of what the gnostics called *daimones.* The exorcism translated itself through a word-synthesis that seemed to solve the tension between the sub-human word of the "I" and the transcendental word of the "you." The inner duologue found its conclusion apparently in a language of mantic metaphors, in a superconscious synthesis.

VERTIGRAL looks towards the future for an *élite* of inter-racial men and a new art of the word that will create the myths of a supernatural universe in logomantic terms.

Part Two

Oralities, Rituals, and Colloquies

Communities

To say that there are different languages is insufficient: there are also different communities of speakers. Class distinctions and professional associations are commonly reflected in speech, but patterns of speech themselves can be willfully reconstituted as a pliable medium of social congregation. The rise of nation-states throughout the nineteenth century was in large measure attributable to the consolidations of various vernaculars. Wilhelm von Humboldt proposed that "each language . . . contains a characteristic world view." But the flexibilities of a language can also be constraints. "Man surrounds himself by a world of sounds in order to take into himself the world of objects and operate on them. . . . The same act which enables him to spin language out of himself enables him to spin himself into language, and each language draws a circle around the people to whom it adheres which it is possible for the individual to escape only by stepping into a different one." Linguistic relativism and linguistic opportunism are perpetually bound together. Summarizing von Humboldt, Gerald Bruns describes language as "an expressive movement which carries the ingredients of human experience into the open and establishes them there as a world of objects." It is this reification, the substantiation of expressivity in autonomous forms, that secures continuity between individual speakers.

The poetic stimulus of the vernacular has been intoxicating for some writers. Walt Whitman documented new slang in his notebooks (resulting in the essay on "Slang in America" included here), drafted an "American Primer" on behalf of the intuitive wisdom of folk usage, and contributed extensive passages to linguist William Swinton's book Rambles among Words. *Dante violated literary propriety by writing his epic* Commedia *in Italian rather than Latin; and, like Whitman, wrote a treatise on behalf of the "vulgar tongue" (*De vulgare eloquentia*). To adapt to a language is to align oneself with a preexisting poetry: such would be the incentive that has motivated many writers to fulfill their own idiomatic potentials. A dystopic alternative is given in Christopher Dewdney's "Dialectic Criminal." The text is composed entirely of stock phrases, disclosing how thoroughly our own seemingly autonomous speech can be infiltrated by the dialect of the tribe. To speak openly and expressively may be to unwittingly fall prey to an involuntarism served up from within language itself, as the viral agent of a world view we don't often suspect we occupy just by speaking a language.*

To invent a language is potentially to invent a world. But such inventions are merely privations without participants. Idiolects, jargons, slang, and patois are common ways in which delimited linguistic territory is carved out by groups of individuals wishing to distinguish themselves by a principle of identity. Elective deviations of this kind can be traced to such apparently spontaneous activity as children's nonsense games, as well as to the more refined medium of secret codes. Evidence suggests that social communication is not rule-bound or subject to decree and regulation, but is consolidated in the *ad hoc spirit of play. While the oppression of racism is discernible in Harlem jive, as documented in the Cab Calloway word list included here, a ludic aspect persists in what Zora Neale Hurston identifies as "the urge to adorn." Cockney rhyming slang is a comparably exuberant adjustment to social disadvantage—of which "canting," our seventeenth-century selection here, is another instance. While canting was a genuine argot of the underworld, rhyming slang was mobile across class and national boundaries.*[1] *Canting (or "pelting," and later called "flash language") seemed the basis of slang to early nineteenth-century criminologists; but Julian Franklyn surmises a more plausible development in labor scenarios of the industrial revolution, in which verbally distinctive populations like the Irish and Cockney navvies were thrown together in fitful collaboration. In view of the spirit of contestatory play that clearly influenced Black American jive, signifying, and the dozens, Franklyn's thesis seems plausible. A notable feature of rhyming slang is its principle of condensation. Rhyming phrases frequently substitute for single words ("pig's ear" for beer), but once the phrases are in common use they can themselves be abridged while retaining their substitutional connotation; so "bees and honey," the term for money, can be reduced to* bees. *Such abbreviations can in turn serve as incentives for further expansion, and Franklyn offers as example of an alphabetic template a worker, ordered to mount a rolled steel joist, quickly retorting with a play on the initials RSJ: "Wot's-a-marrer wif yeh?—Fink I've onie jes' come on na bleetn' job? Fink I don't know wot an Irish Jay is?"*

Other forms can be less spontaneous and more doctrinaire, but their inventiveness is striking nonetheless. The Boontling argot that developed in northern California in the late nineteenth century adheres to a rudimentary set of principles, mainly involving vocabulary substitutions, which is in keeping with its intended use as coded speech. The Jamaican Rastafarians, on the other hand, decompose "proper" English in a highly deliberative fashion in keeping with their millenarian convictions. Rastafarian social justice reclaims "I" from the vantage of privilege and redistributes it freely through the language, in the process liberating pejorative subject expressions; so "I and I" and "I-man" replace "we" and "you," which are disposed of as the vestigial rubble of a coercive class distinction. In the Caribbean, English is one of several imposed imperial languages, along with French, Dutch, and Spanish. Kamau Brathwaite has evocatively summarized the Caribbean insurgency of "nation language" (which he contrasts to the derogatory term "dialect"), to refer to an emergent "English that is not the standard, imported, educated English, but that of the submerged, surrealist experience and sensibility . . . an English which is like a howl, or a shout, or a machine-gun, or the wind, or a wave. It is also like the blues." Among many examples of this undermining of standard English is the poetic use of a calypso or "kaiso" syncopation as poetic relief from English pentameter. Equally significant is the aggressive compositional matrix provided by sound effects: "Noise is that decorative energy that invests the nation performance. Unnecessary but without which not enough." That Brathwaite characterizes noise as "congregational kinesis" suggests why it is so difficult to represent nation language (and other community practices) in the inertial medium of print, for which reason Brathwaite himself has developed an electronic analogue he calls "Sycorax video style."

The interplay of speech and silence does not divide into signifying and nonsignifying halves. There are codes of silence as well as speech which, along with expressive and involuntary gestures, contribute to a continuum of signification exceeding the scope of the delimitable utterance—just as there are esoteric languages like Ethiopian zar *or the* balabailan *of the Sufis. Hermetic, private, and alternative idiolects arise as a way of deploying this recognition inside the pragmatic shell of normativity. Documentation of such practices is difficult to abbreviate, and they are best observed at length, in works of literature that demonstrate the heteroglossic potential regarded by Mikhail Bakhtin as the great achievement of the novel as a genre. Even conversation is, and has, an art, as Peter Burke and Michel Jeanneret have documented. Our extract describing the code of inversion that prevails on the peyote hunt in Mexico represents one way in which the apportionment of licit and illicit speech is recomposed in a ceremonial setting.*

The distinction between linguistic propriety and dereliction does not hold up when considering dissident practices developed socially over time. The African American practice of "signifying" wrinkles the presumption of unilateral communicative rationality. Signifying embodies discrepant realizations of a situation, corresponding to the civil bifurcations of racism as well as to the psychological condition W. E. B. DuBois calls "double consciousness." A peculiar or original use of words is not a denial of other uses. Language may be compliant with instrumental reason, but instrumentality needs to be reconceived: the wheel, for instance (to cite another instrument), can be associated with modes of conveyance, but this does not foreclose its hydraulic use as a paddle wheel. Likewise, a gesturally inclined vocalism is not a nihilistic disparagement of semantic exchange. The two might be seen as reciprocal, illustrative of the semantic polarity of denotation and connotation. The creaturely parameters of the voice evolve into language even as they retain the biological countenance of such other vocalizations as laughing, crying, moaning, hooting, and hissing.

A view of language as embedded in a manifold of somatic expressiveness has links to the longstanding preoccupation with a natural language. Francis Bacon refers to Egyptian hieroglyphics as "a kind of earlier born writing, and older than the very elements," and on that analogy suggests that "Gestures are as transitory Hieroglyphics." Speculating that Chinese writing was a constellation of postures and gestures, Bacon accorded primacy to pictographic gestural expression: "as hieroglyphs were before letters, so parables were before arguments." The Jesuit priest Marcel Jousse[2] *devoted his life to scrutinizing the psychomotor resources of speech. Jousse used an ensemble of actors to prove that Christ's parables were disseminated in a postural choreography of "bilateral, dissymmetric complementarity by which sayings are graven right and left, forward and backward into trunk and limbs, rather than just into the ear and eye." The gestures are "kernel phrases" which are "rhythmo-catechized" in bilateral mime: "Incarnate in yourself the great pedagogical balancings of Iéshoua [Jesus] until you feel them playing in your throat and throughout your whole musculature," Jousse urged his followers.*

Jousse raises the question of whether it is language that overflows into the body, animating its gestures as semiotic components, or the other way round—that a world of versatile semiosis subsumes the gestural manifold of the body and thereafter condenses into language, a compromise between manual and vocal gesture. Sign language and gestural symbolism were extensively used by North American Plains Indians and Australian aboriginals. Critchley's *Language of Gesture* documents the pervasiveness of corporeal supplements to, and displacements of, language as conventionally understood (and he goes so far as to outline an involuntary vocalism as the genetic inception of speech, corroborating Horne Tooke's view that "the dominion of speech is erected upon the downfall of interjections"); while Leroi-Gourhan argues from an anthropological and archaeological perspective for the cultural imbrication of gesture and speech. Such works suggest that the signing of the deaf may be less a prosthesis than a return to the primal semiotic structure of our hominid resources. Polish theatrical innovator Jerzy Grotowski insists on the plastic repertoire of bodily posture and gesture: the actor "must be able to construct his own psycho-analytic language of sounds and gestures in the same way that a great poet creates his own language of words." "Imprint on your memory," he exhorts his actors: "The *body* must work first. Afterwards comes the *voice*."[3] Such recommendations parallel the manual attunement of *mudra*, the repertoire of Buddhist hand gestures, as well as reminding us of pantomime as ancient theatrical resource. Dramaturgy in India includes hand movements "which denote famous emperors, the lords of the earth, the seven oceans, well-known rivers, the upper and lower worlds, various trees, animals, birds and fishes"; and Chinese theater recognizes over fifty varieties of sleeve movement. Sir Richard Paget estimates that some 700,000 distinct signs can be articulated bodily, and Critchley calculates that "the human hand can be regarded as 20,000 times as versatile as the mouth." Among the manual gestures, Paget and Critchley omit the art of writing, which would presumably augment the total figure in an exponential rather than an additive way. If such figures seem awesome, it's worth heeding the anthropological estimate that "a human being puts out between 2,500 and 10,000 bits of information per second in various modalities."

To be embodied is to be immersed in prelinguistic signification. Weston LaBarre's survey "Paralinguistics, Kinesics, and Cultural Anthropology" covers a vast array of semiotic provocations, such as walking, crying, laughing, smiling, beckoning, greeting, kissing, pointing, and other motor sememes, conventionalized motor acts, conversational gestures, gestures of contempt and of politesse, and a host of examples ranging from the Baroque "language of the fan" to Canary Islanders' whistled language, "a complete speech surrogate" substituting whistles for Spanish phonemes. LaBarre conceives these activities within the categorical coordinates of *proxemics* (the theory of spatiality, to which he offers a counterpart: *chronemics*); and, as might be imagined, he is disposed to a mimicry hypothesis for the origins of language, which he sees arising from "*vocal* gestures of higher primate 'phatic' communication" such as the danger signal, courtship, territorialization, and so on—speculating further that language is related to "a 'social hormone' that readies the ape group for synergistic action." LaBarre cites, as his predecessors, Democritus, Epicurus, Lucretius, Vico, Rousseau, and Sapir. Regardless of whether the genealogy is credible, his imposing research corroborates the intuition Joyce ventures in *Ulysses*, "that gesture, not music, not odours, would be a universal language, the gift of tongues rendering visible *not the lay sense but the first entelechy, the structural rhythm." Gesture enfolds speech in a corporeal stance: "Thus language by its very root, which is articulation," says Ortega y Gasset, "remains a part of man's repertory—it might be better to say system—of gestures." The affirmation of a gestural, expressive enhancement of corporeality prompted R. P. Blackmur (who titled a collection of his essays on poetry* Language as Gesture*) to insist that "when the language of words most succeeds it* becomes *gesture in its words." "Language as gesture creates meaning as conscience creates judgment, by feeling the pang, the inner bite, of things forced together." A community, in other words*—in other words.

The other of words is the gestural manifold of the body, symbolized by the hand, as affirmed by the cross-cultural pervasiveness of the handshake. The African American locution "give me some skin" directs the handshake to its dermagraphic subtext. John Bulwer acclaims the "natural language of the hand as it had the happiness to escape the curse at the confusion of Babel." On closer inspection, it is "as if man had another mouth or fountain of discourse in his hand." George Dalgarno, advocating on behalf of the deaf, thought he could "discern a Mouth and a Tongue in [the] Hand: the Thumb seemed to represent the Tongue, the Fingers and the hollow of the Hand the lips, teeth, and cavity of the Mouth." The artifactual dimension of communication is nicely illustrated by Walter Benjamin's association of storytelling with the handicraft of weaving. Friedrich Engels speculated on the anthropological significance of the hand for evolution. "Thus the hand is not only the organ of labour, it is also the product of labour"—*the hand being the fulcrum of the nature/culture interface, exempting it from those mimologic fantasies of verbal language. In Heidegger's formulation: "The hand's gestures run everywhere through language, in their most perfect purity precisely when man speaks by being silent."*

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1 Rhyming slang was quickly adapted to Australia and the United States, mostly through the British deportation of convicts. The criminal association dominates early accounts of slang like *Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (1796) by Francis Grose and *The Flash Dictionary* (1821), which is largely incorporated by H. Brandon into his 1839 survey *Poverty, Mendacity, and Crime* and reprinted as an appendix to *Sinks of London Laid Open* in 1848. It is not until 1859 that John Hotten bestows linguistic credibility on rhyming slang in *The Slang Dictionary.* An equally fascinating example of underworld jargon is that of the Coquillard bandits of the fifteenth century, of which François Villon's "Ballades en Jargon" may be an example. Every language has its underworld jargon, it seems, from Italian *furbesco* and Spanish *germania* to Portuguese *calão* and German *Rotwelsch,* among others. M. A. K. Halliday theorizes such practices as "antilanguages," and intriguingly suggests that even literature may be regarded as an antilanguage, or at least "both language and antilanguage at the same time." The basic feature of an antilanguage is "to create an alternative reality." For a notably alternative linguistic reality, see Brisset (in "Retentions and Secretions," p. 493 below), who held that Latin was not a real language but the slang of civilized brigands: "*Latinus* comes from *latus* (carried) and/or from *latere* (to hide), and it means 'hidden transposition' or, if you prefer, *secret inversion.*"

2 Jousse was a significant influence on James Joyce, who attended his lectures while writing *Finnegans Wake* and claimed to be attempting in the *Wake* a parallel to Jousse's demonstration of *gesture* as the source of language. "In the beginning was the gest he jousstly says" Joyce writes, playing "gest" off English *jest* and French *geste* (gesture) and implicating the medieval narrative *chansons de geste.*

3 The Abbé Fénelon had proposed a type of theater consisting only of gestures and predenotative cries in 1714 (section 6 of *Lettre à l'Académie*). This occasioned a reply from Jean Baptiste Du Bos that emphasized the difficulty of restricting tragedy to cries. Fénelon's theater finds a belated echo in François Dufrêne's "cri-rhythmes" of the 1950s.

Ramón Medina Silva

How the Names Are Changed on the Peyote Journey

Well, let's see now. I shall speak about how we do things when we go and seek the peyote, how we change the names of everything. How we call the things we see and do by another name for all those days. Until we return. Because all must be done as it must be done. As it was laid down in the beginning. How it was when the mara'akáme who is Tatewarí[1] led all those great ones to Wirikuta. When they crossed over there, to the peyote country. Because that is a very sacred thing, it is the most sacred. It is our life, as one says. That is why nowadays one gives things other names. One changes everything. Only when they return home, then they call everything again what it is.

When everything is ready, when all the symbols which we take with us, the gourd bowls, the yarn discs, the arrows, everything has been made, when all have prayed together we set out. Then we must change everything, all the meanings. For instance: a pot which is black and round, it is called a head. It is the mara'akáme who directs everything. He is the one who listens in his dream, with his power and his knowledge. He speaks to Tatewarí, he speaks to Kauyumari.[2] Kauyumari tells him everything, how it must be. Then he says to his companions, if he is the leader of the journey to the peyote, look, this thing is this way, and this is how it must be done. He tells them, look, now we will change everything, all the meanings, because that is the way it must be with the *hikuritámete* [peyote pilgrims]. As it was in ancient times, so that all can be united. As it was long ago, before the time of my grandfather, even before the time of his grandfather. So the mara'akáme has to see to everything, so that as much as possible all the words are changed. Only when one comes home, then everything can be changed back again to the way it was.

"Look," the mara'akáme says to them, "it is when you say 'good morning,' you mean 'good evening,' everything is backwards. You say 'goodbye, I am leaving you,' but you are really coming. You do not shake hands, you shake feet. You hold out your right foot to be shaken by the foot of your companion. You say 'good afternoon,' yet it is only morning."

So the mara'akáme tells them, as he has dreamed it. He dreams it differently each time. Every year they change the names of things differently because every year the mara'akáme dreams new names. Even if it is the same mara'akáme who leads the journey, he still changes the names each time differently.

And he watches who makes mistakes because there must be no error. One must use the names the mara'akáme has dreamed. Because if one makes an error it is not right. That is how it is. It is a beautiful thing because it is right. Daily, daily, the mara'akáme goes explaining everything to them so that they do not make mistakes. The mara'akáme says to a companion, "Look, why does that man over there watch us, why does he stare at us?" And then he says, "Look, what is it he has to stare at us?" "His eyes," says his companion. "No,"

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[1] Huichol name for the deity with whom the shaman has a special affinity, roughly translatable as Our Grandfather Fire.

[2] Kauyumari is a trickster hero, quasi-deified and roughly translatable as Sacred Deer Person.

the mara'akáme answers, "they are not his eyes, they are tomatoes." That is how he goes explaining how everything should be called.

When one makes cigarettes for the journey, one uses the dried husks of maize for the wrappings. And the tobacco, it is called the droppings of ants. Tortillas one calls bread. Beans one calls fruit from a tree. Maize is wheat. Water is tequila. Instead of saying, "Let us go and get water to drink," you say, "Ah, let us take tequila to eat." *Atole* [maize broth], that is brains. Sandals are cactus. Fingers are sticks. Hair, that is cactus fiber. The moon, that is a cold sun.

On all the trails on which we travel to the peyote country, as we see different things we make this change. That is because the peyote is very sacred, very sacred. That is why it is reversed. Therefore, when we see a dog, it is a cat, or it is a coyote. Ordinarily, when we see a dog, it is just a dog, but when we walk for the peyote it is a cat or a coyote or even something else, as the mara'akáme dreams it. When we see a burro, it is not a burro, it is a cow, or a horse. And when we see a horse, it is something else. When we see a dove or a small bird of some kind, is it a small bird? No, the mara'akáme says, it is an eagle, it is a hawk. Or a piglet, it is not a piglet, it is an armadillo. When we hunt the deer, which is very sacred, it is not a deer, on this journey. It is a lamb, or a cat. And the nets for catching deer? They are called sewing thread.

When we say come, it means go away. When we say "shh, quiet," it means to shout, and when we whistle or call to the front we are really calling to a person behind us. We speak in this direction here. That one over there turns because he already knows how it is, how everything is reversed. To say, "Let us stay here," means to go, "let us go," and when we say "sit down," we mean, "stand up." It is also when we have crossed over, when we are in the country of the peyote. Even the peyote is called by another name, as the mara'akáme dreamed. Then the peyote is flower or something else.

It is so with Tatewarí, with Tayaupa.[3] The mara'akáme, we call him Tatewarí. He is Tatewarí, he who leads us. But there in Wirikuta, one says something else. One calls him "the red one." And Tayaupa, he is "the shining one." So all is changed. Our companion who is old, he is called the child. Our companion who is young, he is the old one. When we want to speak of the machete, we say "hook." When one speaks of wood, one really means fish. Begging your pardon, instead of saying "to eat," we say "to defecate." And, begging your pardon, "I am going to urinate" means "I am going to drink water." When speaking of blowing one's nose, one says "give me the honey." "He is deaf" means "how well he hears." So everything is changed, everything is different or backwards.

The mara'akáme goes explaining how everything should be said, everything, many times, or his companions would forget and make errors. In the late afternoon, when all are gathered around Tatewarí, we all pray there, and the mara'akáme tells how it should be. So for instance he says, "Do not speak of this one or that one as serious. Say he is a jaguar. You see an old woman and her face is all wrinkled, coming from afar, do not say, 'Ah, there is a man,' say 'Ah, here comes a wooden image.' You say, 'Here comes the image of Santo Cristo.' Or if it is a woman coming, say 'Ah, here comes the image of Guadalupe.' "

Women, you call flowers. For the woman's skirts, you say, "bush," and for her blouse you say "palm roots." And a man's clothing, that too is changed. His clothing, you call his fur. His hat, that is a mushroom. Or it is his sandal. Begging your pardon, but what we carry down here, the testicles, they are called avocados. And the penis, that is his nose. That is how it is.

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[3] Our Father Sun.

When we come back with the peyote, the peyote which has been hunted, they make a ceremony and everything is changed back again. And those who are at home, when one returns they grab one and ask, "What is it you called things? How is it that now you call the hands hands but when you left you called them feet?" Well, it is because they have changed the names back again. And they all want to know what they called things. One tells them, and there is laughter. That is how it is. Because it must be as it was said in the beginning, in ancient times.

Translated by Barbara Myerhoff

John Bulwer

Included here is the prefatory exposition of John Bulwer's Chirologia; or the Natural Language of the Hand *(1644), with an accompanying "chirogrammatic" plate. Bulwer wrote several books arguing on behalf of sign language as a natural extension of the signifying propensity of speech. As he put it in a prefatory verse to* Philocophus: or, the Deafe and dumbe mans friend *(1648):*

To make of the Deafe and Dumbe amends,
Illustrious Nature heere descends
To dance the senses Masque: a Ball,
Which we their Anagram may call . . .

One might compare Bulwer's advocacy of signing with George Dalgarno's parable of the blind Homer and the deaf Aesop in "Fictive Encounters" (p. 192 below).

From *Chirologia; or the Natural Language of the Hand*

In all the declarative conceits of Gesture, whereby the Body, instructed by Nature, can emphatically vent, and communicate a thought, and in the propriety of its utterance express the silent agitations of the minde: the *Hand,* that busie instrument, is most *talkative,* whose *language* is as easily perceived and understood, as if Man had another mouth or fountaine of discourse in his *Hand.* So proper and apt to make signes, and work great matters is the *Hand* of Man; It seems to me observable, that when *Moses* covertly desired to make a signe of God, to make the Aegyptians believe He had appeared unto him, God presently asked him what he had in his *Hand?* and commands him naturall gestures which had thence the force of miraculous signification: and to these signes, God attributes a voice, for He saith, If they will not hearken to the voice of the first signe, they will believe the voice of the latter signe: (and as there is in the supernaturall, so there is a signifying voyce in the naturall signes of the *Hand.*) *Althusius* calls these miraculous expressions of the Hand, *habitus portentosos,* which by their rare and illustrious action denote and expresse some singular and memorable intention by the command of God, besides their naturall signification. For the Hand being the *Substitute* and *Viceregent* of the Tongue, in a full, and majestique way of expression, presents the *signifying faculties* of the soule, and the inward discourse of Reason: and as *another Tongue,* which we may justly call the *Spokesman* of the Body, it *speakes* for all the members thereof, denoted their *Suffrages,* and including their *Votes.* So that whatsoever thought can be delivered, or made *significantly manifest,* by the united motions and connative endeavours of all the other members: the same may be as evidently exhibited by the sole devoyre and *discoursing gestures* of the *Hand.* The intendments of which demonstrative gestures (being naturall signes) have no dependance on any ordinance or Statute of Art, which may be broken off, or taken in *hand;* as it is either repealed, or stands in force: but these being part of the unalterable Lawes and Institutes of Nature, are by their owne perpetuall constitution, and by a native consequence significant. As smoke which in darke vapours expires from incensed fuell is a certaine signe of fire; or as rich smells by whose aromatique breath the ayer's perfum'd, doe sweetly declare the presence of the ascended odour: and as the blushes of *Aurora* bewray the early approach of the bright Emperour of the day: So that in these Art hath no *Hand,* since they proceed from the meere instinct of Nature: and all these motions and habits of the *Hand* are purely naturall, not positive; nor in their senses remote from the true nature of the things that are implyed. The naturall resemblance and congruity of which expressions, result from the habits of the minde, by the effort of an impetuous affection wrought in the invaded *Hand,* which is made very plyant for such impressions. But whereas these speaking Organs are couplets, an active pair; sometimes they both, and not seldome one alone doth by a neat insinuation of speech, make and accomplish the habit. Sometimes differing words, which visibly grow on one root of action, goe for Synonimas in gesture: and we shall sometimes see contrarietie of patheticall expression, an identity of posture.

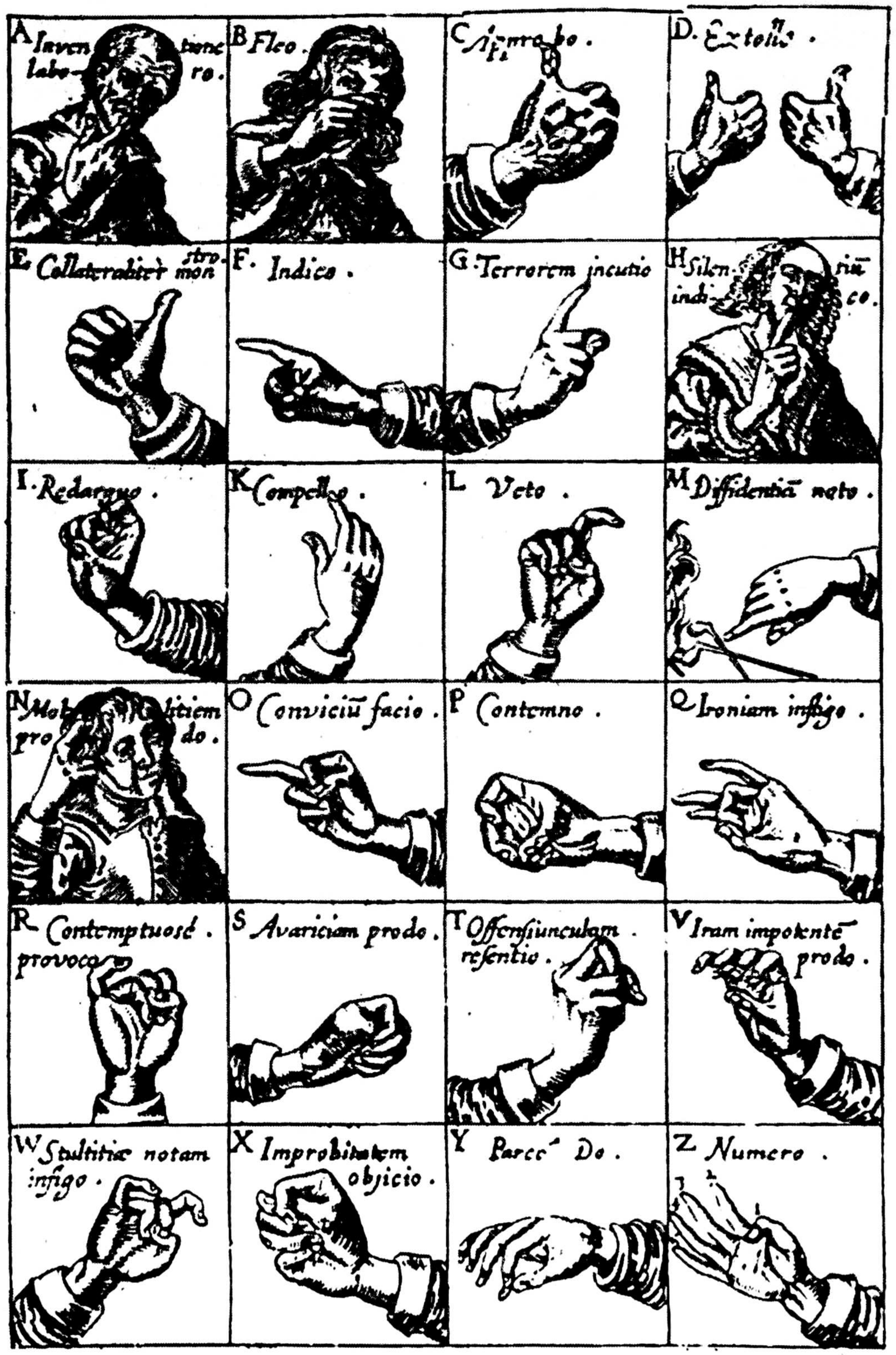
Nor doth the *Hand* in one speech or kinde of language serve to intimate and expresse our minde. It speakes all languages, and as an *universal character of Reason,* is generally understood and knowne by all Nations, among the formall differences of their Tongue. And being the onely speech that is naturall to Man, it may well be called the *Tongue and generall language of Humane Nature,* which, without teaching, men in all regions of the habitable world doe at the first sight most easily understand. This is evident by that trade and commerce with those salvage Nations who have long injoy'd the late discovered principalities of the West, with whom (although their Language be strange and unknown) our Merchants barter and exchange their Wares, driving a rich and silent Trade, by signes, whereby many a dumb bargaine without the crafty Brocage of the Tongue, is advantageously made. Hence 'tis apparent, that there's no native law, or absolute necessity, that those thoughts which arise in our pregnant minde, must by mediation of our Tongue flow out in a vocall streame of words; unto which purpose we must attend the leisure of that inclosed instrument of speech: Since whatsoever is perceptible unto sense, and capable of a due and fitting difference; hath a naturall competency to expresse the motives and affections of the Minde; in whose labours, the *Hand,* which is a ready Midwife, takes oftentimes the thoughts from the forestalled Tongue, making a more quicke dispatch by gesture: for when the fancy once wrought upon the *Hand,* our conceptions are display'd and utter'd in the very moment of a thought. For, the gesture of the *Hand* many times gives a hint of our intention, and speakes out a good part of our meaning, before our words, which accompany or follow it, can put themselves into a vocall posture to be understood. And as in the report of a Piece, the eye being the nimbler sense, discernes the discharge before any intelligence by conduct of the vocall Wave arrive at the eare; although the flash and the report are twins born at the instant of the Pieces going off: so although Speech and Gesture are conceived together in the minde, yet the *Hand* first appearing in the delivery, anticipates the Tongue, in so much as many times the Tongue perceiving her self forestall'd, spares it selfe a labour; to prevent a needlesse Tautologie: And if words ensue upon the gesture, their addition serves but as a Comment for the fuller explication of the manuall Text of utterance; and implyes nothing over and above but a generall devoyre of the minde to be perfectly understood. A notable argument we have of this *discoursing facultie* of the *Hand* in our common Jesters, who without their voice, speaking onely by gestures, can counterfeit the manners, fashions, and significant actions of men. Which may be more confirm'd by that wonder of necessity which Nature worketh in men that are borne deafe and dumbe; who can argue and dispute rhetorically by signes, and with a kinde of mute and logistique eloquence overcome their amaz'd opponents; wherein some are so ready & excellent, they seeme to want nothing to have their meanings perfectly understood. T'is parallel to this, what Natures grand Inquisitor reports of certaine Nations, that have no other language wherein to impart their mindes; the common tongue of Beasts, who by gestures declare their senses, and dumb affections. For although *Seneca* will not allow their motions to be affections, but certain characters & impressions *ad similitudinem passionum,* like unto passions in men, which he calleth impetus, the risings, forces and impulsions of Nature, upon the view of such objects as are apt to strike any impressions upon it: yet as *Montaigne* (in that elegant Essay of his, where he in imitation of *Plutarch,* maintaines that Beasts participate with us in the rationality of their discourses) shewes, that even they that have no voyce at all, by their reciprocall kindnesse, which we see in them, we easily inferre there are some other meanes of entercommunication: their gestures treat, and their motions discourse.

Non alia longe ratione atque ipsa videtur
Protrahere ad Gestum, pueros infantia linguae.
No otherwise, then for they cannot speake,
Children are drawne by signes their mindes to breake.

And why not (saith he) as well as our dumbe men dispute and tell histories by signes? Certainly (as he well observeth) there is a society and communion of justice, fellowship, good will, and affection betweene us and Brutes: they being not so remote from good nature, gentlenesse, and sweet converse, but that they can expresse their desire of honour, generositie, industrious sagacity, courage, magnanimity, and their love and feare; neither are they void of subtilty and wisedome. For by reason of their affinity as it were, and daily conversation with men, they get a tincture from us of our manners and fashions, and consequently enjoy a kinde of nurture and teaching discipline, and apprenticing by imitation, which does enable them to understand and expresse themselves in this language of gesture, teaching us by learning of us, that capable they be not onely of the inward discourse of Reason, but of the outward gift of utterance by gesture: and if there be some gestures of ours that they doe not understand, so there are some of theirs which need an Interpretor, a greater Critique in their language then *Democritus Melampus,* or *Apollonius Thyaneus* were, who understood all the idiomes of Birds and Beasts, to expound them unto us. *Plato* in setting out the golden Age under *Saturne,* reckons among the chiefest advantages, this kinde of communication. And indeed it is a kinde of knowledge that *Adam* partly lost with his innocency, yet might be repaired in us, by a diligent observation and marking of the outward effects of the inward and secret motions of beasts.

This *naturall Language of the Hand,* as it had the happinesse to escape the curse at the confusion of Babel: so it hath been sanctified and made a holy language by the expressions of our Saviours *Hands;* whose gestures have given a sacred allowance to the naturall significations of ours. And God speakes to us by the signes of his *Hand* (as *Bernard* observes) when he works his wonders, which are the proper signes of his *Hand. Hic est Digitus Dei,* say the astonished *Magi,* when they acknowledged the expression of a Divine *Hand.* . . . After this manner Christ our Lord to his doctrine added the signes of his *Hand,* that is, his workes: according to that of the Evangelist, *Iesus began* to *doe* and *teach.* And as God speakes to us with his *Hand* by a supernaturall way: so we naturally speake to Him, as well as unto men, by the *appeale* of our *Hands* in *admiration, attestation,* and *prayer.* Nay when we are beyond the vocall lines of communication with men, and that distance of place hath the highest tone of our Tongue too low to reach the auditory nerve of one that is remote: or when the noise of some eare-deafing crowd hath rendred our Tongue unserviceable to declare our minde; we use the visible expressions of our *Hand,* as more loud and demonstrative, which are afarre off perceived and understood by those who were uncapable of an auricular intimation. And as concerning those *manuall expressions* which we use to those are lesse distant from us, the *Hand* is so ready and cunning to expound our intentions, abounding in a sense so copious, and so connaturall a kind of eloquence, wherein all things are so lively exprest; the *Hand* seemes to enter into contestation, and to vie expresses with the *Tongue,* and so over-match it in speaking labours, and the significant varietie of important motions, that it almost transcends the faculty of Art to enumerate the postures of the *Hand,* and the *discoursing gestures* which present the interpretation of the Minde. Whose manifest habits rise to so high an account in the *Hand,* that if their totall summe could be cast up, they would seeme to exceed the numericall store of words, and the flowry amplifications of Rhetoricall Phrases. For, with our *Hands* we

Sue, intreat, beseech, sollicite, call, allure, intice, dismisse, graunt, denie, reprove, are suppliant, feare, threaten, abhor, repent, pray, instruct, witnesse, acuse, declare our silence, condemne, absolve, shew our astonishment, profer, refuse, respect, give honour, adore, worship, despise, prohibit, reject, challenge, bargaine, vow, sweare, imprecate, humour, allow, give warning, command, reconcile, submit, defie, affront, offer injury, complement, argue, dispute, explode, confute, exhort, admonish, affirme, distinguish, urge, doubt, reproach, mocke, approve, dislike, encourage, recommend, flatter, applaud, exalt, humble, insult, adjure, yeeld, confesse, cherish, demand, crave, covet, blesse, number, prove, confirme, congee, salute, congratulate, entertaine, give thankes, welcome, bid farewell, chide, brawle, consent, upbraid, envy, reward, offer force, pacifie, invite, justifie, contemne, disdaine, disallow, forgive, offer peace, promise, perform, reply, invoke, request, repell, charge, satisfie, deprecate, lament, condole, bemoane, put in minde, hinder, praise, commend, brag, boast, warrant, assure, enquire, direct, adopt, rejoice, shew gladnesse, complaine, despaire, grieve, are sad and sorrowful, cry out, bewaile, forbid, discomfort, ask, are angry, wonder, admire, pittie, assent, order, rebuke, savour, slight, dispraise, disparage, are earnest, importunate, referre, put to comprimise, plight our faith, make a league of friendship, strike one good luck, give handsel, take earnest, buy, barter, exchange, shew our agreement, expresse our liberality, shew our benevolence, are illiberall, aske mercy, exhibit grace, shew our displeasure, fret, chafe, fume, rage, revenge, crave audience, call for silence, prepare for an apology, give liberty of speech, bid one take notice, warne one to forbeare, keepe off and be gone; take acquaintance, confesse our selves deceived by a mistake, make remonstrance of anothers errour, weepe, give a pledge of aid, comfort, relieve, demonstrate, redargue, perswade, revolve, speake to, appeale, professe a willingnesse to strike, shew our selves convinced, say we know somewhat which yet we will not tell, present a check for silence, promise secresie, protest our innocence, manifest our love, enmity, hate and despight; provoke, hyperbolically extoll, inlarge our mirth with jollity and triumphant acclamations of delight, note and signifie anothers actions, the manner, place, and time, as how, where, when, &c.


A Inven- tione labo- ro.
B Fleo.
C Approbo.
D. Extollo.
E Collateraliter monstro.
F. Indico.
G Terrorem incutio
H Silen- tium indi- co.
I. Redarguo.
K Compello.
L Veto.
M Diffidentiā noto.
N Mo titiem pro do.
O Conviciū facio.
P Contemno.
Q Ironiam infligo.
R Contemptuosé provoco.
S Avaritiam prodo.
T Offensiunculam resentio.
V Iram impotentē prodo.
W Stultitiæ notam infigo.
X Improbitatem objicio.
Y Parce Do.
Z Numero.

Alphabet of Natural Gestures of the Fingers

George Dalgarno

Of Scottish descent, Dalgarno taught grammar at a private school in Oxford but maintained close contact with leading scholars at the university, including John Wilkins (see "Transpositions," p. 227 below). Dalgarno made significant contributions to the then fashionable project of a universal language, the fruits of his linguistic, taxonomic, and graphemic offerings—including a universal character—being gathered in Ars signorum *(1661). His method of sign analysis, which he named sematology, with its tripartite division of supernatural, natural, and conventional signs, remains a forerunner of modern semiotics. The finger alphabet below is from* Didascalocophus *(1680) and bears comparison with Bulwer's chirological project (shown above) and with van Helmont's pronunciation diagrams (see "Transpositions," p. 231), similarly designed to facilitate communication among the deaf and dumb.*

Of an Alphabet upon the Fingers

Because the conveniency of writing cannot alwaies be in readiness; neither yet tho it could, is it so proper a *medium* of interpretation between persons present face to face, as a Hand-language: It will therefore be necessary to teach the Dumb Scholar a Finger-Alphabet; and this not only of single letters, but also for the greater expedition, of double and triple Consonants, with which our English doth abound.

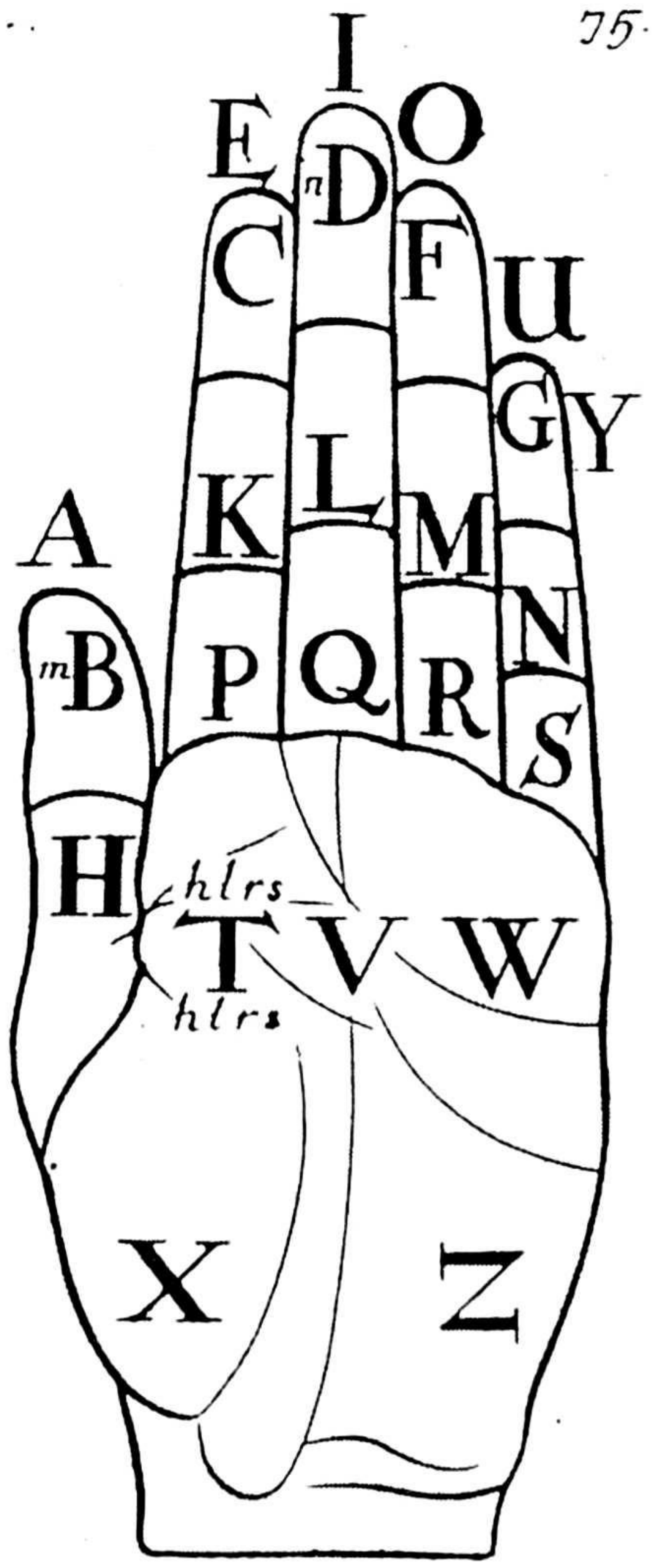
After much search and many changes, I have at last fixt upon a Finger, or Hand-alphabet according to my mind. . . . The Rules of practice are two. 1. *Touch the places of the Vowels, with a cross touch with any finger of the right hand.* 2. *Poynt to the Consonants with the Thumb of the right Hand.*

Now because this discourse may fall into the hands of some that have trifling Heads like my own, to whom it will be acceptable to know what other waies of Dactylology I have had under consideration: I will, for satisfying their curiosity, and perhaps saving them the expence of vain labour, mention some other waies which I have considered, and after examination rejected.

The first way is to make the figures of the letters upon the Hand, which differs only from writing in this; that the one is transient, and the other permanent. It is true, that this is more ready upon all occasions than writing; but neither distinct nor quick enough to be taken notice of here.

A second way is the forming of the letters Symbolically; as to make an X by crossing two fingers; a cross touch upon the end of the thumb for a T; three fingers joyned for M, two fingers joyned for N, &c. This Symbolical way I reject, as being defective in two respects: First, it is defective in the point of symbolizing; for it will not be easy with the fingers to represent the shapes of all letters. This way of expressing the letters Symbolically, is somewhat like the conceit of a symbolical Character, and a Language of Nature, which some have talked much of; but without any foundation in Nature, and therefore all attempts of Art must be in vain. But secondly, this way is too laborious, and so defective in answering one of the principal ends for which Cheirology is desirable, and deserves the name of an Art: That is, a quick and ready expression, and interpretation of the conceits of the mind, coming as near as possible to that of the Tongue.

The third way is to design every single letter by a single touch; which I judge much the better way, than either of the other two; as being more simple, distinct, easy, and of quick dispatch. Having therefore resolved upon this, that the most proper way to express the simple Elements of the Alphabet would be, by a single touch; it remained that they should be distinguished amongst themselves by their places. And here again, after consideration and tryal, I have rejected several waies of distinguishing the letters by places. First, I provided places on both Hands, back and fore; but finding this laborious and intricate, and perceiving that there might be distinction enough found in one hand, I placed the whole Alphabet upon one Hand; yet so as to make use of an equal number of places on both sides of the Hand: But at last finding that all the necessary distinctions could be provided for, on one side of the Hand, I fixt upon the institution of the present Scheme. . . .



For after a long and tyresome chase, and having pursued my Notion, as I thought, to a *nil ultra;* when I was set down, and pleasing my self with my purchase; on a sudden I fancied my self to see an one-handed deaf man coming to me, and as much as I could read in his eyes and countenance, expostulating with me thus? What? Have you done? Is there no help for me? Shall one Eye serve in Schematology? & one Ear in Pneumatology? one tongue in Glossology? yea one hand in Typology? and shall not one Hand serve in Dactylology? With this fixing my Eyes stedfastly on his Hand stretched out, I thought with my self, that I could discern a Mouth and a Tongue in his Hand: the Thumb seemed to represent the Tongue, the Fingers and the hollow of the Hand the lips, teeth, and cavity of the Mouth. Upon this I made Signs to him to try to follow me, as I pointed to the letters on my own Hand; which he did so exactly that the surprise put me in a maze for some time. But when I had overcome my passion, reflecting upon this wonder both of Nature and Art, I observed that of the 24 letters, he pointed to 16 with his Thumb. Thus I dismissed my Deaf and lame patient, bidding him be of good courage, and live in hopes of an effectual and speedy cure.

But after he was gone, I began to consider with my self. What? shall I magnify this as a mystery and wonder of Nature and Art, to find a way, to Metamorphize a *Chymaera* into a Man, or, to make a black Swan white? This will be *magno conatu magnas nugas agere.* As I was thus thinking, it happened that I was smoking a pype of Tobacco; and having a present occasion to dispatch a speedy message; I was unwilling to let my Pype go out, and so at that present was deprived both of the use of my Tongue and one Hand: wherefore reflecting upon the lesson which I had lately taught the one-handed Deaf man, or shall I rather say, which he taught me; I called a boy to me, whom I had trained up in Dactylology, and delivered my message to him with one Hand. He staring in my face with a smiling countenance (for I had never spoken to him before that time with one Hand) performed the message very readily, and returned me a speedy answer, using the same Organ of Interpretation (for I surprised him eating an Apple) to me, which I had done to him. This gave me occasion to think, that this point of Art had not only one-handed Deaf men for its Object; but that there might be many other cases wherein it might be useful to speak with one hand: as to speak to a Dumb man riding on Horseback, holding the reins with one hand, and with the other asking him. *How do you do?* or sitting at Table; holding the Cup with one hand, and with the other saying, *Sir my service to you.* Or, with one hand holding the knife, and with the other asking; *what will you be pleased to have?* &c.

And if any man could be supposed to have that readiness and presence of mind which is said to have been in *J. Cæsar* he might at once keep up discourse with 3 several persons, upon several subjects, talking to two with his two hands, and to a third with his Tongue. And here by the by, it is observable, that without any distraction of mind one may speak both to a Deaf and Blind man at once, expressing the *same* words by the Tongue to the Blind man, and by the hand to the Deaf.

. . . If the Deaf man be trained up in this Art, and have no body about him skilled in it but himself, it is no use to him at all. . . . It will be the concern of the Deaf persons friends (beside the influencing all his familiars to acquaint themselves with this Art for his cause) to chuse some fit person to be a constant companion to him, and to be his Interpreter upon all occasions amongst strangers. And which is yet a more weighty concern: It would be their wisdom to project a match for the Deaf person, *man* or *woman* betimes; that the person they are to match with, may be trained up in

Cheirology, which would add very much to the comfort of their life; they being thereby able to express and communicate their sentiments intelligibly, not only by Dactylology in the *light,* but also by Haptology in the *dark.*

. . . The particular cases wherein it may be convenient, are many more than can be expected, that I should instance in: I shall therefore mention only three generals. 1. Silence. 2. Secrecy. 3. Pleasure. In cases of necessary Silence, it may be useful to inferiors in the presence of Great persons; to those that are about sick people, as near relations, Nurses, &c. So for Secrecy, if people be in company, but not so near as to whisper one another in the Ear, it performs the office of whispering; it delivers and receives secret messages, &c. And lastly for pleasure; it may be an ingenious and useful divertisement and past-time for young people.

Here it may be objected, That all the conveniency will not ballance the pains that must be taken in learning this Art. This objection puts me in mind of another, and that a very considerable Conveniency; and therefore I answer. The pains that is taken about learning a Hand-language, if it were learned in due time, that is, in Childhood, would be so far from hindring, that it would contribute much to the Childs progress in learning to read, if he were taught both to know his letters, and to spell upon his fingers. This would please the Childs fancy, and imprint the letters the sooner upon his memory, having his Book alwaies open before his Eyes. So that I look upon this as the greatest conveniency of Cheirology, That it would be of so great use, and learned with so little pains.

And this consideration put me upon thinking of a more adviseable way of training up young ones, than any yet practiced, that is: To begin children to know their letters upon an Hand-book instead of an Horn-book; or at least to have a Hand-book upon the backside of their Horn-book: For I make no doubt but before they could come to know the names and Figures of the letters, they would know their places upon the Hand, and be able to point to them with the other, or the same Hand, as readily as to pronounce them with the Tongue.

And who will not acknowledge that it were a thing desirable, and deservedly to be esteemed as a peice of liberal education; to be able to speak as readily with the Hand as with the Tongue?

Richard Head and Francis Kirkman

This compact lexicon of rogue idiolect first appeared in Richard Head's picaresque novel The English Rogue: described in the Life of Meriton Latroon. *Head (c.1636–c.1687) was born in Ireland, attended Oxford, then drifted into an unsuccessful career as bookseller. A compulsive gambler and profligate, he apparently turned to low-life fiction and hack writing to support his costly lifestyle. The titles of a few of his works suggest subcultural areas of expertise:* The Caterpillars of this Nation Anatomized; Proteus Redivivus, or the Art of Wheedling; The Canting Academy, or The Devil's Cabinet Opened; *and* The Floating Island *(an imaginary tour of London's demimonde and prisons). A salacious poem, "Venus' Cabinet Revealed," appears not to have survived.* The English Rogue *was secretly printed and covertly sold in taverns. The original manuscript was rejected by the Censors of the Press for its gross indecency, appearing in 1665 in a revised and obviously toned-down version. Francis Kirkman, a bookseller and hack writer, acquired the rights the following year and subsequently expanded the work to four books.*

Canting Vocabulary

Having supped (most commonly in a plentiful manner), we cannot 'Couch a Hogshead,' that is to say, sleep, without good store of 'Rum-booz,' that is, drink; and having sufficiently warmed our brains with humming liquor, which our 'Lower' (Silver) shall procure; if our deceitful 'Maunding' (Begging) cannot, we then sing a catch or two in our own language, of which we had good store; which for their bawdry I omit. However, give me leave to instance one canting song, and I shall waive the rest, being loth to tire you too much with one thing.

Bing out bien Morts, and toure, and toure,
Bing out bien Morts, and toure;
For all your Duds are bing'd awast
The bien Cove hath the loure.
I met a Dell, I view'd her well,
She was benship to my watch;
So she and I did stall, and cloy,
Whatever we could catch.
This Doxy Dell can cut bien whids,
And wap fell for a win;
And prig and cloy so benshiply,
All the Deusea-vile within.
The boyle was up, we had good luck,
In frost for and in Snow:
When they did seek, then did we creep,
And plant in Ruffe-mans low.
To strawling Ken the Mort bings then,
To fetch loure for her cheats;
Duds & Ruffe-peck, Rombold by Harman beck,
And won by Maunders feats.

Ye Maunders all, stow what you stall,
To Rome Coves what so quire,
And wapping Dell, that niggles well,
And takes loure for her hire.
And Jybe well jerckt, teck rome confect,
For back by glymmar to Maund;
To mill each ken, let Cove bing then,
Through Ruff-mans, jague, or Laund,
Till Crampings quire tip Cove his hire;
And Quire Ken do them catch,
A Canniken, mill quire Cuffin,
So quire to ben Coves watch.
Bien Darkmans then, Bouse Mort and Ken,
The bien Coves bings awast,
On Chates to trine by Rome Coves dine,
For his long lib at last.
Bing out bien Morts and toure, and toure,
Bing out of the Rome vile bine,
And toure the Cove that cloyd your duds,
Vpon the Chates to trine.

Having even wearied ourselves with drinking and singing, we tumbled promiscuously together, male and female in straw, not confining ourselves to one constant consort, we made use of the first that came to hand; by which means incests and adulteries became our pastimes. By this means I grew weary of their practices, and therefore resolved to desert them as soon as the first opportunity should offer itself, which was in a short time; wherefore at the present I shall say no more of them, only give me leave to give some small account of their language.

The first inventor of canting, as I am informed, was hanged about four-score years since: such gibberish was never heard of before; since which time there hath not been wanting such who have taken pains in the polishing, refining, and augmenting that language of the Devil's imps. It is a confused invention of words; for its dialect I cannot find to be grounded on any certain rules; and no wonder since the founders and practicers thereof are the chief fathers and nourishers of disorder. Yet even out of that irregularity a man may observe some kind of form, and some words do retain something of scholarship, as 'Togeman,' a gown, from *Toga;* 'Pannam,' from *Panis,* bread; 'Cosan,' *Caseus,* cheese. The monosyllable 'Cheat'; we use as a relative, as *Nab,* a head; 'Nab-cheat,' a hat, &c. 'Cove' or 'Cuffin' is in general terms a man; but by adding 'bien,' which signifies good or well, or 'Quire,' which is wicked or knavish, you make the word 'Cove' signify an honest man, or a justice of peace. Pardon the expression, for they call a justice 'Quier Cuffin'; that is to say, as before mentioned, a wicked, knavish, or foolish man. To conclude, I shall here insert this little Canting Vocabulary alphabetically,

Autem Mort	A married woman
Abram	Naked
Abram Cove	A tatterdemallion
Autem	A church
Bughar	A cur
Bouse	Drink
Bousing Ken	An ale-house
Borde	A shilling

Boung	A purse
Bien	Good or well
Benshiply	Very well
Benar	Better
Bing	To go
Bing a waste	To go away
Bube	The pox
Bufe	A dog
Bleating cheat	A sheep
Belly cheat	An apron
Betty	An instrument to break a door
Bite the Peter or Roger	Steal the portmantle or cloak-bag
Budge	One that steals cloaks
Bulk and File	The Pickpocket and his mate
Cokir	A liar
Cove	A man
Cuffin	
Cuffin-Quire	A justice of peace
Cramprings	Bolt or shackles
Chats	The gallows
Canke	Dumb
Crackmans	Hedges
Calle	A cloak
Togeman	
Joseph	
Couch	To lie or sleep
Couch a Hogshead	To go to sleep
Commission	A shirt
Mish	
Cackling cheat	A chicken
Cassan	Cheese
Crash	To kill
Crashing cheats	Teeth
Cloy	To steal
Cut	To speak
Cut bien whids	To speak well
Cut quire whids	To speak evilly

Confeck	Counterfeit
Cannakin	The plague
Cly the Jerk	To be whipped
Clapperdogeon	A beggar born
Culle	A sap-headed fellow
Dimber	Pretty
Damber	Rascal
Drawers	Stockings
Duds	Goods
Deusea-vile	The country
Dommerar	A madman
Darkmans	Night or evening
Doxy	A wench
Dell	
Dock	To ——— [lie with]
Wap	
Deuswins	Twopence
Dup	To enter
Earnest	A part
Tip me my Earnest	Give me my part or share
Frummagem	Choked
Filch	A staff
Ferme	A hole
Fambles	Hands
Famble chears	Rings or gloves
Fib	To beat
Flag	A groat
Fogus	Tobacco or smoke
Fencing Cully	One that receives stolen goods
Glymmer	Fire
Glaziers	Eyes
Grannam	Corn
Gentry-Mort	A gallant wench
Gan	A lip
Gage	A pot or pipe
Grunting cheat	A sucking-pig
Giger	A door

Gybe	Any writing or pass
Glazyer	One that goes in at the windows
Gilt	A pick-lock
Harmanback	A constable
Harmans	The stocks
Heave a Booth	To rob an house
Half bord	Sixpence
Hearts ease	A twenty shilling piece
Jocky	A flail, or man's privities
Jague	A ditch
Jarke	A seal
Ken	An house
Kinchin	Little
Knapper of Knappers	A sheep-stealer
Kinchin Cove	A little man
Kate	A pick-lock
Loure	Money
Lightmans	Morning or day
Lib	To tumble
Libben	An house to lie in
Lage	Water
Libedge	A bed
Lullaby-cheat	A child
Lap	Pottage
Lurries	All manner of clothes
Maunder	To beg
Maunders	Beggars
Margery Prater	A hen
Mill	To steal
Make	A halfpenny
Mynt	Gold
Muffling cheat	A napkin
Mumpers	Genteel beggars
Milken	One that breaks houses
Munns	The face
Nab	A head
Nab-cheat	A hat

Nab	To take Or cheat
Palliard	One whose father is a beggar born
Paplar	Milk-pottage
Prats	Thighs
Prigg	To ride
Peckidge	Meat
Pannam	Bread
Plant	To lay or hide
Prigging	Riding
Prancer	A horse
Pratting cheat	A tongue
Peake	Any lace
Pike on the Leen	Run as fast as you can
Perry	Fearful
Peter	A portmantua
Prigger of Prancers	A horse-stealer
Pad	The highwayman
Plant your whids	Have a care what you say
Quarron	A body
Quacking cheat	A duck
Quier	Wicked or roguish
Quier-Ken	A prison
Quier-Mort	A pocky jade
Quier-Cove	A rogue
Romboyle	A ward or watch
Rome	Gallant
Rome-vile	London
Rome-Mort	A gallant girl
Ruffin	The devil
Roger	A cloak-bag
Ridge-cully	A goldsmith
Ruffler	An over-grown rogue
Ruffe peck	Bacon
Rod-shanke	A mallard
Rom-pad	The highway
Rome-padders	Highwaymen

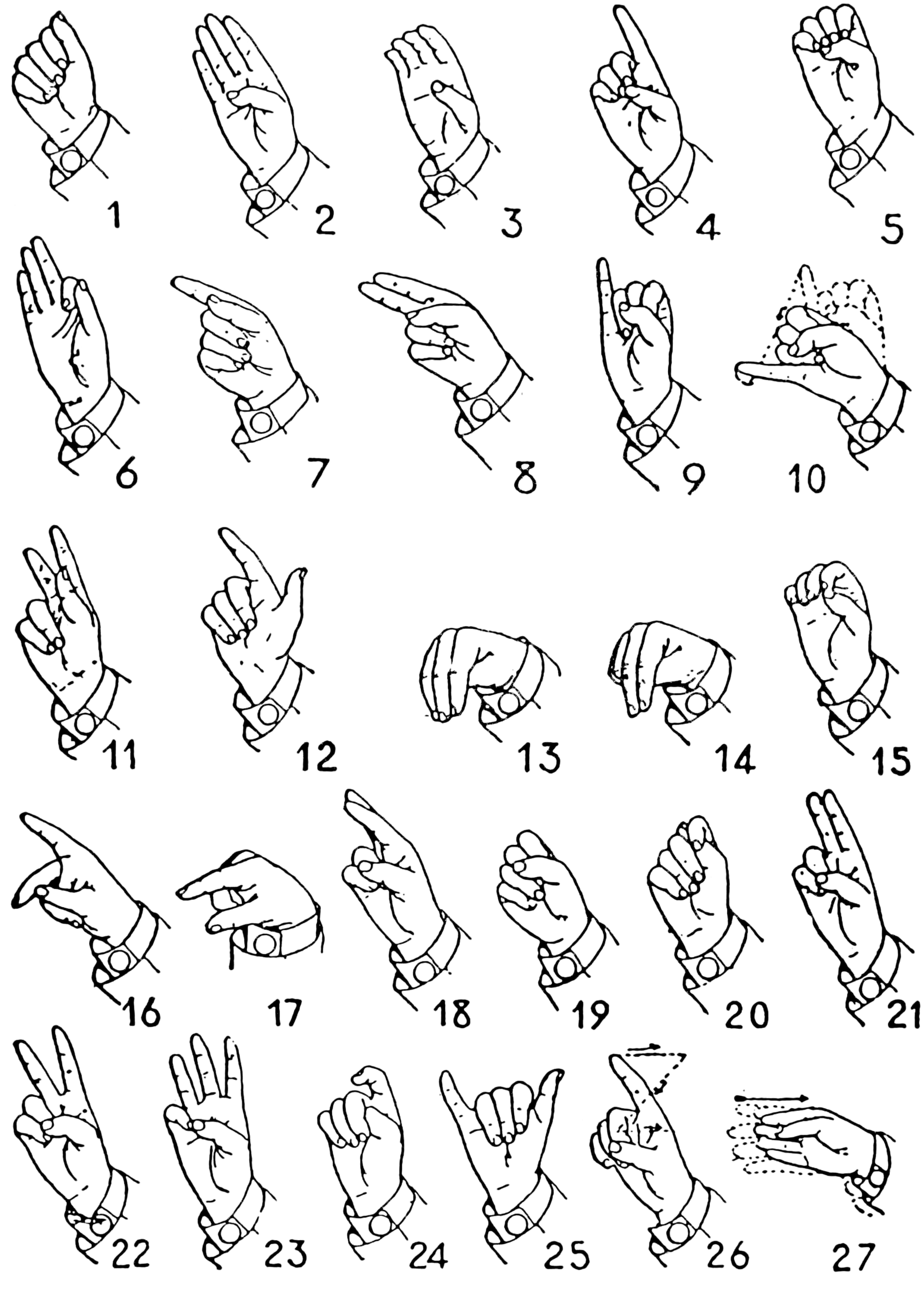
Rome-Culle	A rich coxcomb
Swagg	A shop
Sundge	One that lies under the bed to rob the house
Shop-lift	One that steals out of shops
Stampers	Shoes
Stock-drawers	Stockings
Stamps	Legs
Scoure	To wear
Skew	A dish
Slate	A sheet
Strommel	Straw or hair
Skepper	Barn
Stow your whids	Be wary
Stalling-Ken	Broker's house, or an house to receive stolen goods
Smelling cheat	A garden
Solomon	The Mass
Tour	To look out
Tout his muns	Look in his face
Track up the Dancers	Go up the stairs
The Cul Snylches	The man eyes you
Tip the Cole to Adam Tyler	Give what money you pocket-picked to the next party, presently
Tip the Mish	Give the shirt
Tib o' th' Buttery	Goose
Tip	To give
The Mort tipped me a wink	The whore gave me a wink
Trine	Tyburn
Trining	Hanging
Tick-Rome	A licence
Tres wins	Threepence
Win	A penny
Wicher Cully	A silver-smith
Yarum	Milk

This much for a taste. I think it not worth my pains to insert all those canting words which are used; it is enough that I have here divulged what words are most in use.

Anonymous

This dactylogical provocation is probably the work of Georges Bataille, the French philosopher and novelist, theorist-proponent of "the accursed share"—the heterogeneous and transgressive, unassimilable to the codes of civil behavior. In this piece the standard finger-signing alphabet popularized in the nineteenth century by T. H. Gallaudet is gratuitously seized upon as a signal catalogue of sexual innuendo and proposition, and may be assigned to the category of "found objects" pioneered by Marcel Duchamp. Bataille and Duchamp were both anonymous contributors to the Encyclopedia Da Costa, *where "Erotism" was published. The* Da Costa *made a fugitive appearance in Paris in 1947, purporting to be one of a series of fascicles (in this case confined to entries beginning with the letter E), but the rest were never issued. It appears to have been guided through publication by Patrick and Isabelle Waldberg, Robert Lebel, and Duchamp. Another entry, "Expression," appears here in the section "Sound Effects" (p. 102). For a less profane, more philanthropic finger alphabet, see Bell (in "Spelling, Saving, and Spending," p. 463).*

Erotism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EROTISM. — 1. Accost. 2. Burgle. 3. Cunnilinguate. 4. Deflower. 5. Ensnare. 6. Fuck. 7. Gallivant. 8. Harass. 9. Irrumate. 10. Jismify. 11. Kink. 12. Lesbianise. 13. Masturbate. 14. Nidify. 15. Occult. 16. Pedicate. 17. Quench. 18. Ream. 19. Syphilise. 20. Tup. 21. Urticate. 22. Violate. 23. Waggle. 24. Xiphoidify. 25. Yonirise. 26. Zoogonise. 27. Recommence.

Translated by Iain White

Lupino Lane

Dialogues in Rhyming Slang from *Me and My Girl*

DUCHESS: I hope you enjoyed your drive.

BILL: Not arf—but I nearly lost me titfa!

ALL: Titfa?

BILL: Me tit for tat.

ALL: Tit for tat?

BILL: My Hat! It was so windy I had to pull it over my gingerbread.

ALL: Gingerbread?

BILL: Me lump o' lead!

ALL: Lump of lead?

BILL: Me Uncle Ned!

ALL: Uncle Ned?

BILL: Oh, me 'ead—the empty part o' me.

. . .

BILL: I'm 'ere ter day an' gone termorrer. I started loife w' nuffink an' I still got it; but when I'm absolutely 'earts—

SIR JOHN: Arts?

BILL: 'earts of Oak.

SIR JOHN: A Building Society?

BILL: Naow! Broke!

. . .

BILL: You're not kiddin' me, are yeh? D'you reely mean teh say as Lord Hareford were relly moi ole' pot an' pan?

DUCHESS: Pot and pan?

BILL: I mean—moi ole man. My farver . . . I don't fit in . . . 'Oxton 'stead of Oxford! 'ere, I'm a sport. Gimme da bees an' honey—

ALL: Bees and honey?

BILL: The money—then I'll mizzle.

Walt Whitman

Slang in America

View'd freely, the English language is the accretion and growth of every dialect, race, and range of time, and is both the free and compacted composition of all. From this point of view, it stands for Language in the largest sense, and is really the greatest of studies. It involves so much; is indeed a sort of universal absorber, combiner, and conqueror. The scope of its etymologies is the scope not only of man and civilization, but the history of Nature in all departments, and of the organic Universe, brought up to date; for all are comprehended in words, and their backgrounds. This is when words become vitaliz'd, and stand for things, as they unerringly and soon come to do, in the mind that enters on their study with fitting spirit, grasp, and appreciation.

Slang, profoundly consider'd, is the lawless germinal element, below all words and sentences, and behind all poetry, and proves a certain perennial rankness and protestantism in speech. As the United States inherit by far their most precious possession—the language they talk and write—from the Old World, under and out of its feudal institutes, I will allow myself to borrow a simile even of those forms farthest removed from American Democracy. Considering Language then as some mighty potentate, into the majestic audience-hall of the monarch ever enters a personage like one of Shakspere's clowns, and takes position there, and plays a part even in the stateliest ceremonies. Such is Slang, or indirection, an attempt of common humanity to escape from bald literalism, and express itself illimitably, which in highest walks produces poets and poems, and doubtless in pre-historic times gave the start to, and perfected, the whole immense tangle of the old mythologies. For, curious as it may appear, it is strictly the same impulse-source, the same thing. Slang, too, is the wholesome fermentation or eructation of those processes eternally active in language, by which froth and specks are thrown up, mostly to pass away; though occasionally to settle and permanently chrystallize.

To make it plainer, it is certain that many of the oldest and solidest words we use, were originally generated from the daring and license of slang. In the processes of word-formation, myriads die, but here and there the attempt attracts superior meanings, becomes valuable and indispensable, and lives forever. Thus the term *right* means literally only straight. *Wrong* primarily meant twisted, distorted. *Integrity* meant oneness. *Spirit* meant breath, or flame. A *supercilious* person was one who rais'd his eyebrows. To *insult* was to leap against. If you *influenc'd* a man, you but flow'd into him. The Hebrew word which is translated *prophesy* meant to bubble up and pour forth as a fountain. The enthusiast bubbles up with the Spirit of God within him, and it pours forth from him like a fountain. The word prophecy is misunderstood. Many suppose that it is limited to mere prediction; that is but the lesser portion of prophecy. The greater work is to reveal God. Every true religious enthusiast is a prophet.

Language, be it remember'd, is not an abstract construction of the learn'd, or of dictionary-makers, but is something arising out of the work, needs, ties, joys, affections, tastes, of long generations of humanity, and has its bases broad and low, close to the ground. Its final decisions are made by the masses, people nearest the concrete, having most to do with actual land and sea. It impermeates all, the Past as well as the Present, and is the grandest triumph of the human intellect. "Those mighty works of art," says Addington Symonds, "which we call languages, in the construction of which whole peoples unconsciously co-operated, the forms of which were determin'd not by individual genius, but by the instincts of successive generations, acting to one end, inherent in the nature of the race—Those poems of pure thought and fancy, cadenced not in words, but in living imagery, fountainheads of inspiration, mirrors of the mind of nascent nations, which we call Mythologies—these surely are more marvellous in their infantine spontaneity than any more mature production of the races which evolv'd them. Yet we are utterly ignorant of their embryology; the true science of Origins is yet in its cradle."

Daring as it is to say so, in the growth of Language it is certain that the retrospect of slang from the start would be the recalling from their nebulous conditions of all that is poetical in the stories of human utterance. Moreover, the honest delving, as of late years, by the German and British workers in comparative philology, has pierc'd and dispers'd many of the falsest bubbles of centuries; and will disperse many more. It was long recorded that in Scandinavian mythology the heroes in the Norse Paradise drank out of the skulls of their slain enemies. Later investigation proves the word taken for skulls to mean *horns* of beasts slain in the hunt. And what reader had not been exercis'd over the traces of that feudal custom, by which *seigneurs* warm'd their feet in the bowels of serfs, the abdomen being open'd for the purpose? It now is made to appear that the serf was only required to submit his unharm'd abdomen as a foot cushion while his lord supp'd, and was required to chafe the legs of the seigneur with his hands.

It is curiously in embryons and childhood, and among the illiterate, we always find the groundwork and start, of this great science, and its noblest products. What a relief most people have in speaking of a man not by his true and formal name, with a "Mister" to it, but by some odd or homely appellative. The propensity to approach a meaning not directly and squarely, but by circuitous styles of expression, seems indeed a born quality of the common people everywhere, evidenced by nick-names, and the inveterate determination of the masses to bestow sub-titles, sometimes ridiculous, sometimes very apt. Always among the soldiers during the Secession War, one heard of "Little Mac" (Gen. McClellan), or of "Uncle Billy" (Gen. Sherman.) "The old man" was, of course, very common. Among the rank and file, both armies, it was very general to speak of the different States they came from by their slang names. Those from Maine were call'd Foxes; New Hampshire, Granite Boys; Massachusetts, Bay Staters; Vermont, Green Mountain Boys; Rhode Island, Gun Flints; Connecticut, Wooden Nutmegs; New York, Knickerbockers; New Jersey, Clam Catchers; Pennsylvania, Logher Heads; Delaware, Muskrats; Maryland, Claw Thumpers; Virginia, Beagles; North Carolina, Tar Boilers; South Carolina, Weasels; Georgia, Buzzards; Louisiana, Creoles; Alabama, Lizzards; Kentucky, Corn Crackers; Ohio, Buckeyes; Michigan, Wolverines; Indiana, Hoosiers; Illinois, Suckers; Missouri, Pukes; Mississippi, Tad Poles; Florida, Fly up the Creeks; Wisconsin, Badgers; Iowa, Hawkeyes; Oregon, Hard Cases. Indeed I am not sure but slang names have more than once made Presidents. "Old Hickory," (Gen. Jackson) is one case in point. "Tippecanoe, and Tyler too," another.

I find the same rule in the people's conversations everywhere. I heard this among the men of the city horse-cars, where the conductor is often call'd a "snatcher" (i.e. because his characteristic duty is to constantly pull or snatch the bell-strap, to stop or go on.) Two young fellows are having a friendly talk, amid which, says 1st conductor, "What did you do before you was a snatcher?" Answer of 2d conductor, "Nail'd." (Translation of answer: "I work'd as carpenter.") What is a "boom"? says one editor to another. "Esteem'd contemporary," says the other, "a boom is a bulge." "Barefoot whiskey" is the Tennessee name for the undiluted stimulant. In the slang of the New York common restaurant waiters a plate of ham and beans is known as "stars and stripes," codfish balls as "sleeve-buttons," and hash as "mystery."

The Western States of the Union are, however, as may be supposed, the special areas of slang, not only in conversation, but in names of localities, towns, rivers, etc. A late Oregon traveller says:

> "On your way to Olympia by rail, you cross a river called the Shookum-Chuck; your train stops at places named Newaukum, Tumwater, and Toutle; and if you seek further you will hear of whole counties labell'd Wahkiakum, or Snohomish, or Kutsar, or Klikatat; and Cowlitz, Hookium, and Nenolelops greet and offend you. They complain in Olympia that Washington Territory gets but little immigration; but what wonder? What man, having the whole American continent to choose from, would willingly date his letters from the county of Snohomish or bring up his children in the city of Nenolelops? The village of Tumwater is, as I am ready to bear witness, very pretty indeed; but surely an emigrant would think twice before he establish'd himself either there or at Toutle. Seattle is sufficiently barbarous; Stelicoom is no better; and I suspect that the Northern Pacific Railroad terminus has been fixed at Tacoma because it is one of the few places on Puget Sound whose name does not inspire horror."

Then a Nevada paper chronicles the departure of a mining party from Reno: "The toughest set of roosters that ever shook the dust off any town left Reno yesterday for the new mining district of Cornucopia. They came here from Virginia. Among the crowd were four New York cock-fighters, two Chicago murderers, three Baltimore bruisers, one Philadelphia prize-fighter, four San Francisco hoodlums, three Virginia beats, two Union Pacific roughs, and two check guerrillas." Among the far-west newspapers, have been, or are, *The Fairplay* (Colorado) *Flume, The Solid Muldoon,* of Ouray, *The Tombstone Epitaph,* of Nevada, *The Jimplecute,* of Texas, and *The Bazoo,* of Missouri. Shirttail Bend, Whiskey Flat, Puppy-town, Wild Yankee Ranch, Squaw Flat, Rawhide Ranch, Loafer's Ravine, Squitch Gulch, Toenail Lake, are a few of the names of places in Butte county, Cal.

Perhaps indeed no place or term gives more luxuriant illustrations of the fermentation processes I have mention'd, and their froth and specks, than those Mississippi and Pacific coast regions, at the present day. Hasty and grotesque as are some of the names, others are of an appropriateness and originality unsurpassable. This applies to the Indian words, which are often perfect. Oklahoma is proposed in Congress for the name of one of our new Territories. Hog-eye, Lick-skillet, Rake-pocket and Steal-easy are the names of some Texan towns. Miss Bremer found among the aborigines the following names: *Men's,* Horn-point; Round-Wind; Stand-and-look-out; The-Cloud-hat-goes-aside; Iron-toe; Seek-the-sun; Iron-flash; Red-bottle; White-spindle; Black-dog; Two-feathers-of-honor; Gray-grass; Bushy-tail; Thunder-face; Go-on-the-burning-sod; Spirits-of-the-dead. *Women's,* Keep-the-fire; Spiritual-woman; Second-daughter-of-the-house; Blue-bird.

Certainly philologists have not given enough attention to this element and its results, which, I repeat, can probably be found working every where to-day, amid modern conditions, with as much life and activity as in far-back Greece or India, under prehistoric ones. Then the wit—the rich flashes of humor and genius and poetry—darting out often from a gang of laborers, railroad-men, miners, drivers or boatmen! How often have I hover'd at the edge of a crowd of them, to hear their repartees and impromptus! You get more real fun from half an hour with them than from the books of all "the American humorists."

The science of language has large and close analogies in geological science, with its ceaseless evolution, its fossils, and its numberless submerged layers and hidden strata, the infinite go-before of the present. Or, perhaps Language is more like some vast living body, or perennial body of bodies. And slang not only brings the first feeders of it, but is afterward the start of fancy, imagination and humor, breathing into its nostrils the breath of life.

Edna L. Sanders

"Boontling" derives from the components "lingo" for speech and "Boont" for Booneville, a town in Mendocino County, California, where the jargon originated in the 1880s and thrived for several decades. Like canting, it was masculine in orientation, with a frank vocabulary for sex and drink; but Boontling lacked criminal connotations, and was widely used by women as well as men. Boontling is most notable for its lexicon, which is strong in compounds, making impromptu coinages possible and even expected. To die, for example, is pike to the dusties *(*pike *= travel,* dusties *= cemetery). A bald man is a* cab *(short for cabbage-head). Semantic resources included the local Pomo language, Spanish, and American and Scotch-Irish slang (*heefus *= "half-assed," incompetent or irresponsible). Onomatopoeia was another contributing factor (*kelockity *= to ride on a train). Functional shifts were common (to* shag *= to move awkwardly, from the adjective "shaggy"; to* briney *= to hit a home run, from "brine" for ocean, since a local ballpark was on the coast). The parochial dimension of Boontling is evident in the frequency with which personal names contributed vocabulary: a goatee was a* billy ryan, *a photograph was a* charlie walker, *and a* mossy *was an abrupt change of topic (after a woman nicknamed Mossy).*

Tales in Boontling

Tomker

Plenty white lay on the ground. Plenty boos, dumplin' dust, flories or loweezies, doolsies, Ikes, smoked borp and seertle but neemer boshe. Not ever a slib of broadie or a dom to string. The doms were needed for Easters, so a kimmie harped to his eeldom—"bosh."

Plenty for white in the drearies but this kimmie and his eeldom were bahl pikers, and they hoped to string a huge granny hatchet. Piked thribs miles but no boshe, not even a paper skull.

Almost nielch when suddenly this granny hatchet piked from the chamise brush. "Kebarl," old boshe bit the dust! Too late to take him to their nook so they

Panther

Snow lay on the ground. There were potatoes, flour, light bread, baking powder biscuits, turnips, ham and fish but no deer meat. Not even a bit of beef or a chicken to kill. The chickens were needed for eggs, so a man told his wife, "We need to kill a deer."

The snow was deep in the mountains but this man and his wife were good walkers and they hoped to kill a big buck. They walked about three miles but there were no deer, not even a small deer.

It was nearly dark when suddenly a huge buck ran from the chamise brush. The gun roared and the great deer fell to the ground. It was too late to completely dress the meat so hung him in a tree and piked. Next dee the ottin' could be done.

About dubs miles from their nook a shrill scream filled the air. They harped, "Probably some eighth high kimmie dreekin' his old dame."

Next dee, before old sol peeked over the drearies, they piked for their boshe but neemer boshe (no more.) Some had been gormed and the rest dragged down into a gully and covered with sticks and leaves. There were many big tomker tracks around. Panther gorms!

Plenty for earth, no jonnem!

they hung him in a tree and went home. Next day the work of skinning him and packing him home could be done.

A couple miles from home a shrill scream filled the air. They said, "Probably some half drunk man beating his wife."

Before sunup they went back for their deer but he was gone. Some had been eaten and the rest dragged down the hill into a gully and covered with sticks and leaves. There were many big panther tracks around.

This is a true story!

The Hob

"Keemwun, keemal, to the huge hob at Poleeko! Bring the old dame and tweeds. Plenty for bahl gorms, skee, steinber and fratti," harped a dame.

The oman hitched up the syke to the syke moshe, loaded in the tweeds and his eeldom and piked to the hob region. The eeldom was nettied in her bahlest dress and trilbies, and her oman sported a fine paul ray sock and chapports.

Musicians, about an eighth high, fiddled and stomped, horned and hooted. Some dames fistered or cocked on their omen about "carryin' on" with other dames.

The gormin' region groaned with gorms the bahl dames had jeffered. Each out doing the other and bragging on her charlie brown or dulcie. Tweeds hobbed and hooted until time to bed down in a sluggin' nook.

Many fisters between Boonters who lived South of the Mason and Dixon Line and Poleekers to the North, but a bahl time was had by all.

Come dawn, all piked back to their regions to charl the broadie, feed the sykes, borps, doms and haireems. Plenty bahl time to shy tiginess.

The Dance

"Come one, come all, to the big dance at Philo! Bring your wife and children. There will be good food, whiskey, beer and wine," called a woman.

The husband hitched up the horse and wagon, loaded in the children and his wife and drove to the dance hall. The woman was dressed in her finest clothes and best shoes and her husband wore a dress suit and vest.

Musicians were slightly intoxicated but they fiddled, stomped, drank liquor and laughed loudly. Some women scolded their husbands for sporting with other women.

The kitchen was filled with food the women had cooked. Each out doing the other and bragging on her pie, cake or candy. Children danced happily until time to go to bed.

Many fights between Boonville folks and Philo people but a good time was had by all.

At dawn all drove, walked or rode horses back to their homes to milk the cows, feed the horses, pigs, chickens and dogs. Plenty good time to keep from going crazy from loneliness.

Zora Neale Hurston

The current eminence of her 1937 novel Their Eyes Were Watching God *has made Hurston misleadingly synonymous with the Harlem Renaissance. While she was a participant in the black literary community of New York in the 1920s (collaborating with Langston Hughes on* Mule Bone*), her rural roots and her interest in folklore set Hurston apart from a cosmopolitan orientation, and* Their Eyes Were Watching God *was widely dismissed by the Harlem intelligentsia. A student of anthropologist Franz Boas, Hurston undertook extensive field research, compiling southern folk tales in* Mules and Men *(1935) and documenting Haitian vodun in* Tell My Horse *(1938). Despite an active publishing career, she died in obscurity in 1960 and her work was eclipsed until novelist Alice Walker located Hurston's unmarked grave in 1973 and, in commemorating it, launched the present revival. In addition to the section on language published here, "Characteristics of Negro Expression" (which appeared with several other essays by Hurston in Nancy Cunard's* Negro *in 1934) discusses embellishment, angularity, and asymmetry as contributing features of African American expressiveness in home decor, dance, folklore, and social and sexual relations.*

Characteristics of Negro Expression

Drama

The Negro's universal mimicry is not so much a thing in itself as an evidence of something that permeates his entire self. And that thing is drama.

His very words are action words. His interpretation of the English language is in terms of pictures. One act described in terms of another. Hence the rich metaphor and simile.

The metaphor is of course very primitive. It is easier to illustrate than it is to explain because action came before speech. Let us make a parallel. Language is like money. In primitive communities actual goods, however bulky, are bartered for what one wants. This finally evolves into coin, the coin being not real wealth but a symbol of wealth. Still later, even coin is abandoned for legal tender, and still later cheques for certain usages.

Every phase of Negro life is highly dramatized. No matter how joyful or how sad the case there is sufficient poise for drama. Everything is acted out. Unconsciously for the most part of course. There is an impromptu ceremony always ready for every hour of life. No little moment passes unadorned.

Now the people with highly developed languages have words for detached ideas. That is legal tender. "That-which-we-squat-on" has become "chair." "Groan-causer" has evolved into "spear" and so on. Some individuals even conceive of the equivalent of cheque words, like "ideation" and "pleonastic." Perhaps we might say that *Paradise Lost* and *Sartor Resartus* are written in cheque words.

The primitive man exchanges descriptive words. His terms are all close fitting. Frequently the Negro, even with detached words in his vocabulary—not evolved in him but transplanted on his tongue by contact—must add action to it to make it do. So we have "chop-axe," "sitting-chair," "cook-pot" and the like because the speaker has in his mind the picture of the object in use. Action. Everything illustrated. So we can say the white man thinks in a written language and the Negro thinks in hieroglyphics.

A bit of Negro drama familiar to all is the frequent meeting of two opponents who threaten to do atrocious murder one upon the other.

Who has not observed a robust young Negro chap posing upon a street corner, possessed of nothing but his clothing, his strength, and his youth? Does he bear himself like a pauper? No, Louis XIV could be no more insolent in his assurance. His eyes say plainly "Female, halt!" His posture exults "Ah, female, I am the eternal male, the giver of life. Behold in my hot flesh all the delights of this world. Salute me, I am strength." All this with a languid posture, there is no mistaking his meaning.

A Negro girl strolls past the corner lounger. Her whole body panging* and posing. A slight shoulder movement that calls attention to her bust, that is all of a dare. A hippy undulation below the waist that is a sheaf of promises tied with conscious power. She is acting out "I'm a darned sweet woman and you know it."

These little plays by strolling players are acted out daily in a dozen streets in a thousand cities, and no one ever mistakes the meaning.

Will to Adorn

The will to adorn is the second most notable characteristic in Negro expression. Perhaps his idea of ornament does not attempt to meet conventional standards, but it satisfies the soul of its creator.

In this respect the American Negro has done wonders to the English language. This is true, but it is equally true that he has made over a great part of the tongue to his liking and has his revision accepted by the ruling class. No one listening to a Southern white man talk could deny this. Not only has he softened and toned down strongly consonanted words like "aren't" to "ain't" and the like, he has made new force words out of old feeble elements. Examples of this are "ham-shanked," "battle-hammed," "double-teen," "bodaciously," "muffle-jawed."

But the Negro's greatest contribution to the language is: (1) the use of metaphor and simile; (2) the use of the double descriptive; (3) the use of verbal nouns.

1. Metaphor and Simile

One at a time, like lawyers going to heaven.
You sho is propaganda.
Sobbing hearted.
I'll beat you till: (a) rope like okra, (b) slack like lime, (c) smell like onions.
Fatal for naked.
Kyting along.
That's a rope.
Cloakers—deceivers.
Regular as pig-tracks.
Mule blood—black molasses.
Syndicating—gossiping.
Flambeaux—cheap cafe (lighted by flambeaux).
To put yo'self on de ladder.

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* From "pang."

2. The Double Descriptive

High-tall.
Little-tee-ninchy (tiny).
Low-down.
Top-superior.
Sham-polish.
Lady-people.
Kill-dead.
Hot-boiling.
Chop-axe.
Sitting-chairs.
De watch wall.
Speedy-hurry.
More great and more better.

3. Verbal Nouns

She features somebody I know.
Funeralize.
Sense me into it.
Puts the shamery on him.
'Taint everybody you kin confidence.
I wouldn't friend with her.
Jooking—playing piano or guitar as it is done in
  Jook-houses (houses of ill-fame).
Uglying away.
I wouldn't scorn my name all up on you.
Bookooing (beaucoup) around—showing off.

Nouns from Verbs

Won't stand a broke.
She won't take a listen.
He won't stand straightening.
That is such a compliment.
That's a lynch.

The stark, trimmed phrases of the Occident seem too bare for the voluptuous child of the sun, hence the adornment. It arises out of the same impulse as the wearing of jewelry and the making of sculpture—the urge to adorn.

In 1934 white shipping heiress Nancy Cunard (who advocated Communism as the only solution for racism) published Negro, *a colossal anthology surveying the worldwide African diaspora in culture, politics, and race relations. Contributors were predominantly black (exceptions included poets William Carlos Williams, Ezra Pound, and Louis Zukofsky, composer George Antheil, and Samuel Beckett who translated several French texts, including an anticolonialist tract by the Surrealists); and the enterprise signaled a momentary revival of the fading Harlem Renaissance. Zora Neale Hurston's extensive portfolio of African American speech (including "Characteristics of Negro Expression") was supplemented by an inventory, "Some Negro Slang," possibly compiled by Cunard. Selections from that list are integrated here with material from* Hepster's Dictionary, *a pamphlet published in 1936 by Cab Calloway, who had risen to fame in 1931 with his hit song "Minnie the Moocher." Harlem jive was broadly disseminated through jazz, soon penetrating white culture (a memorable example being the 1941 film "Ball of Fire," scripted by German emigré Billy Wilder with Charles Brackett, in which Barbara Stanwyck plays the wisecracking Sugarpuss O'Shea, a Snow White figure whose seven dwarves are a team of philologists who need her help updating their dossier on slang). Typical of the seamlessness of the dominant culture's habits of assimilation, white American speech today is richly inflected by an unsuspected jive vocabulary lurking in such innocuous usages as "insane," "crazy," "cool," "man," "boogie," "hip," "out of sight," "far out," "dig," and "later."*

A HUMMER: exceptionally good. "Man, that boy is a hummer."
AIN'T COMING ON THAT TAB: won't accept the proposition. Usually abbreviated to "I ain't coming."
BARBECUE: the girl friend, a beauty.
BARDACIOUS: marvellous.
BATTLE: a very homely girl, a crone.
BEAT UP THE CHOPS (or the gums): to talk, converse, be loquacious.
BEEF: to say, to state. "He beefed to me that, etc."
BERRIES, THE: high praise.
BLIP: something very good. "That's a blip"; "She's a blip."
BOOT: to give. "Boot me that glove."
BRIGHTNIN': daybreak.

BRING MUD: to disappoint.

BROTHER: equivalent to “old chap.”

BUST YOUR CONK: apply yourself diligently, break your neck.

CHIME: hour. “I got in at six chimes.”

CHOKE (go choke): quit talking nonsense.

COGS: sun glasses.

COLLAR THE JIVE: to understand the argot or get the point.

C.P.T.: Colored People’s Time, i.e. late.

CRACKER: a pestilential white, lousy with race prejudice.

CREEPER: wife or sweetheart-stealer.

CREEPS OUT LIKE THE SHADOW: “comes on,” but in smooth, suave, sophisticated manner.

CRUMB CRUSHERS: teeth.

CUPS: sleep. “I gotta catch some cups.”

DICTY: high-class, nifty, smart.

DIG: (1) meet. “I’ll plant you now and dig you later.” (2) look, see. “Dig the chick on your left duke.” (3) comprehend, understand. “Do you dig this jive?”

DIM: evening.

DOGHOUSE: bass fiddle.

DOMI: ordinary place to live in. “I live in a righteous domi.”

DOSS: sleep. “I’m a little beat for my doss.”

DOWN WITH IT: through with it.

DRAPE: suit of clothes, dress, costume.

DREAMERS: bed covers, blankets.

EIGHT-BALL: a very black man.

FALL OUT: to be overcome with emotion. “The cats fell out when he took that solo.”

FAY, OFAY: a white person.

FEELIN’ AS LOW AS WHALES’ DUNG: feeling very low indeed.

FEWS AND TWO: money or cash in small quantity.

FINAL: to leave, to go home. “I finaled to my pad” (went to bed); “We copped a final” (went home).

FRAME: the body.

FRAUGHTY ISSUE: a very sad message, a deplorable state of affairs.

FREEBY: something for nothing.

FRISKING THE WHISKERS: what the cats do when they are warming up for a swing session.

FROLIC PAD: a place of entertainment, theater, nightclub.

FROM WAY BACK: super-skill out of experience.

FRONT: a suit of clothes.

FRUITING: fickle, fooling around with no particular object.

GAMMIN': showing off, flirtatious.

GASSER: sensational. "When it comes to dancing, she's a gasser."

GATE: a male person (a salutation), abbreviation for "gate-mouth."

GIMME SOME SKIN: shake hands.

GLIMMERS: eyes.

GOT YOUR BOOTS ON: you know what it is all about, you are a hep cat, you are wise.

GOT YOUR GLASSES ON: you are ritzy or snooty, you fail to recognize your friends, you are up-stage.

GRAVY, "on this gravy train": getting something without paying.

GREASE: to eat.

GROUND GRIPPERS: new shoes.

GUZZLIN' FOAM: drinking beer.

HARD: fine, good. "That's a hard tie you're wearing."

HARD SPIEL: interesting line of talk.

HIDE-BEATER: a drummer (see skin-beater).

HINCTY: conceited, snooty.

HIP: wise, sophisticated, anyone with boots on. "She's a hip chick."

ICKY: one who is not hip, a stupid person, can't collar the jive.

IGG: to ignore someone. "Don't igg me!"

IN THE GROOVE: perfect, no deviation, down the alley.

JACK: name for all male friends (see gate).

JELLY: anything free, on the house.

JIG-CHASER: white person who runs after Negroes.

JIVE: a deceit, telling the tale.

JUMPED IN PORT: arrived in town.

KICK: a pocket. "I've got five bucks in my kick."

KILL ME: show me a good time, send me.

KNOCK: give. "Knock me a kiss."

KOPASETIC: absolutely okay, the tops.

LAMP: to see, to look at.

LANE: a male, usually a nonprofessional.

LAY SOME IRON: to tap dance. "Jack, you really laid some iron that last show!"

LAY YOUR RACKET: to jive, to sell an idea, to promote a proposition.

LEAD SHEET: a topcoat.

LILY WHITES: bed sheets.

LINE: cost, price, money. "What is the line on this drape" (how much does this suit cost)? "Have you got the line in the mouse" (do you have the cash in your pocket)? (Also, in replying, all figures are doubled. "This drape is line forty" (this suit costs twenty dollars).)

MAGNOLIOUS: magnificent.

MAIN ON THE HITCH: husband.

MAN, THE: the law.

MAN IN GRAY: the postman.

MASH ME A FIN: Give me $5.

MELLOW: all right, fine. "That's mellow, Jack."

MELTED OUT: broke.

MESS: something good. "That last drink was a mess."

METER: quarter, twenty-five cents.

MEZZ: anything supreme, genuine. "This is really the mezz."

MITT POUNDING: applause.

MONKEY-MAN or PUDDLE-DUCK: the deceived husband or lover.

MOO JUICE: milk.

MOOCH, MOSEY: slow-moving.

MOUSE: pocket. "I've got a meter in the mouse."

MURDER: something excellent or terrific. "That's solid murder, gate!"

NIX OUT: to eliminate, get rid of. "I nixed that chick out last week"; "I nixed my garments" (undressed).

NOD: sleep. "I think I'll cop a nod."

OFF THE COB: corny, out of date.

OFF-TIME JIVE: a sorry excuse, saying the wrong thing.

ORCHESTRATION: an overcoat.

PAD: bed.

PECKERWOOD: a poor white.

PIGEON: a young girl.

POUNDERS: policemen.

PUT THE LOCKS ON: in gambling, a quick, brilliant finish; in love, complete success.

RANK: to lower.

RIGHTEOUS: splendid, okay. "That was a righteous queen I dug you with last black."

ROCK ME: send me, kill me, move me with rhythm.

RUG CUTTER: a very good dancer, an active jitterbug.

SAD: very bad. "That was the saddest meal I ever collared."

SADDER THAN A MAP: terrible. "That man is sadder than a map."

SEND: to arouse the emotions (joyful). “That sends me!”
SET OF SEVEN BRIGHTS: one week.
SIGNIFY: to declare yourself, to brag, to boast.
SKIN-BEATER: drummer (see hide-beater).
SKY PIECE: hat.
SLAVE: to work, whether arduous labor or not.
SLIDE YOUR JIB: to talk freely.
SMOKE OVER: to look over.
SNATCHER: detective.
SOLID: great, swell, okay.
SPOUTIN’: talking too much.
STASH: to hide.
THREADS: suit, dress or costume (see drape, dry-goods).
TICK: minute, moment. “I’ll dig you in a few ticks.” Also, ticks are doubled in accounting time, just as money is doubled in giving “line.” “I finaled to the pad this early bright at tick twenty” (I got to bed this morning at ten o’clock).
TIGHT: tough, hard. “It’s tight like that.”
TIMBER: toothpick.
TO DRIBBLE: to stutter. “He talked in dribbles.”
TOGGED TO THE BRICKS: dressed to kill, from head to toe.
TRICKERATION: struttin’ your stuff, muggin’ lightly and politely.
TRILLY: to leave, to depart. “Well, I guess I’ll trilly.”
TRUCK: to go somewhere. “I think I’ll truck on down to the ginmill (bar).”
TWISTER TO THE SLAMMER: the key to the door.
UNDRESSING A MITE: picking a man’s pocket.
UNHEP: not wise to the jive, said of an icky, a Jeff, a square.
UPPITY: conceited.
VINE: a suit of clothes.
V-8: a chick who spurns company, is independent, not amenable.
WREN: a chick, a queen.
WRONG RIFF: the wrong thing said or done. “You’re coming up on the wrong riff.”
YARDDOG: uncouth, badly attired, unattractive male or female.
YEAH MAN: emphatic, devout or brisk Yes.
ZOOT: overexaggerated as applied to clothes.

Christopher Dewdney

The Dialectic Criminal

Colloquial phrases composed of words whose literal meaning is other than the context in which they are used I call *dialectic metaphors.* These units can almost be regarded as single words. They have been constructed by the communal mind to solve morphemic problems inherent in English & surmountable only by using these phrases.

There are two distinct classes to these infra-dialectical metaphors. One class is an outmoded historical connotation, ie 'Put your nose to the grindstone.' while the other class is a purely abstract or nominative procedure giving us 'Head in the clouds.' at its most metaphorical and 'Hairy man, hairy.' or 'Come on.' at its most abstract. It is this latter category which comprises most of the following story.

Hand in Glove with an Old Hat

When it's raining cats and dogs you've got to cut corners because you could get your eyes peeled. You must come to grips with yourself until you fly off the handle & then if you're not fit as a fiddle you'll spill the beans. That's hitting below the belt with the short end of the stick, if I can bring the point home ladies.

*

It all started in early 1975, I had an axe to grind during a blanket freeze. It was no great shakes but I had to go against the grain, iron out the details. You see, I pulled a few strings & had to go off the deep end. But I guess I had reckoned without my host. (That's burning the candle at both ends because this whole thing rings a bell.) The host carried a torch for this chick & now she's praying through the nose. I guess the handwriting was on the wall though.

Anyway, before I got the drop on this I bit the dust and turned the tables. I caught the big shot hanging around by a thread generally laying it on the line. I told him I thought he was right off the wall and it went to his head. He kept it under his hat but greased my palms anyway. Yet I always say strike while the iron is hot and lay low till the heat's off because drawing a line is like splitting hairs. I'd be in the groove now if it wasn't for a bolt out of the blue & even then I got taken to the cleaners. But the whole kit and caboodle is right as rain by my money.

You on the other hand, you put your foot in your mouth & bit off more than you could chew. Now with what's left you put your foot in the door and then accuse *me* of changing my tune? I *had* to change my tune in order to face the music.

I'm going through the motions after bringing the house down because a fly-by-night that held water led me down the garden path. I'm coming on like this because I put one over on you. And now you're out on a limb getting a charge. If you hadn't swapped horses in midstream maybe you could've gotten off. But you've got to keep the ball rolling because you're playing with loaded dice. But then again, who am I to remain on the level?

Anyway back in '75 I was riding a dark horse with a grain of salt up my sleeve. I burned my bridges as I got to them. Everyone around me was starting from scratch because they threw in their towels. I was going like a bat out of hell, I got the drop on it under my skin. A drop in the bucket that is, so now I'm right down your alley because I blew my top. 'In hot water?' you ask, no, just flashing. I'm making tracks because this place is definitely nothing by mouth, by word of mouth that is. You see, when you're over your head in a car pool & no one is biting then it's time to break the ice. And break the ice I did, lemme tell you, this bruiser I double crossed was loaded for bear. I figured it was time to throw a monkey wrench into the works when suddenly he pulled a boner. I didn't waste any time, I hit him below the belt and buried the hatchet. It's a dog's breakfast, lemme tell you, when you're hand in glove with an old hat.

Now I'm letting it all hang out in my old stomping grounds and you can go and take the cake because I've been beating around the burning bush long enough. I've got a stiff upper lip from blowing hot and cold on you bad eggs. I'll never let by-gones become old stand-bys because the leading edge takes the friction.

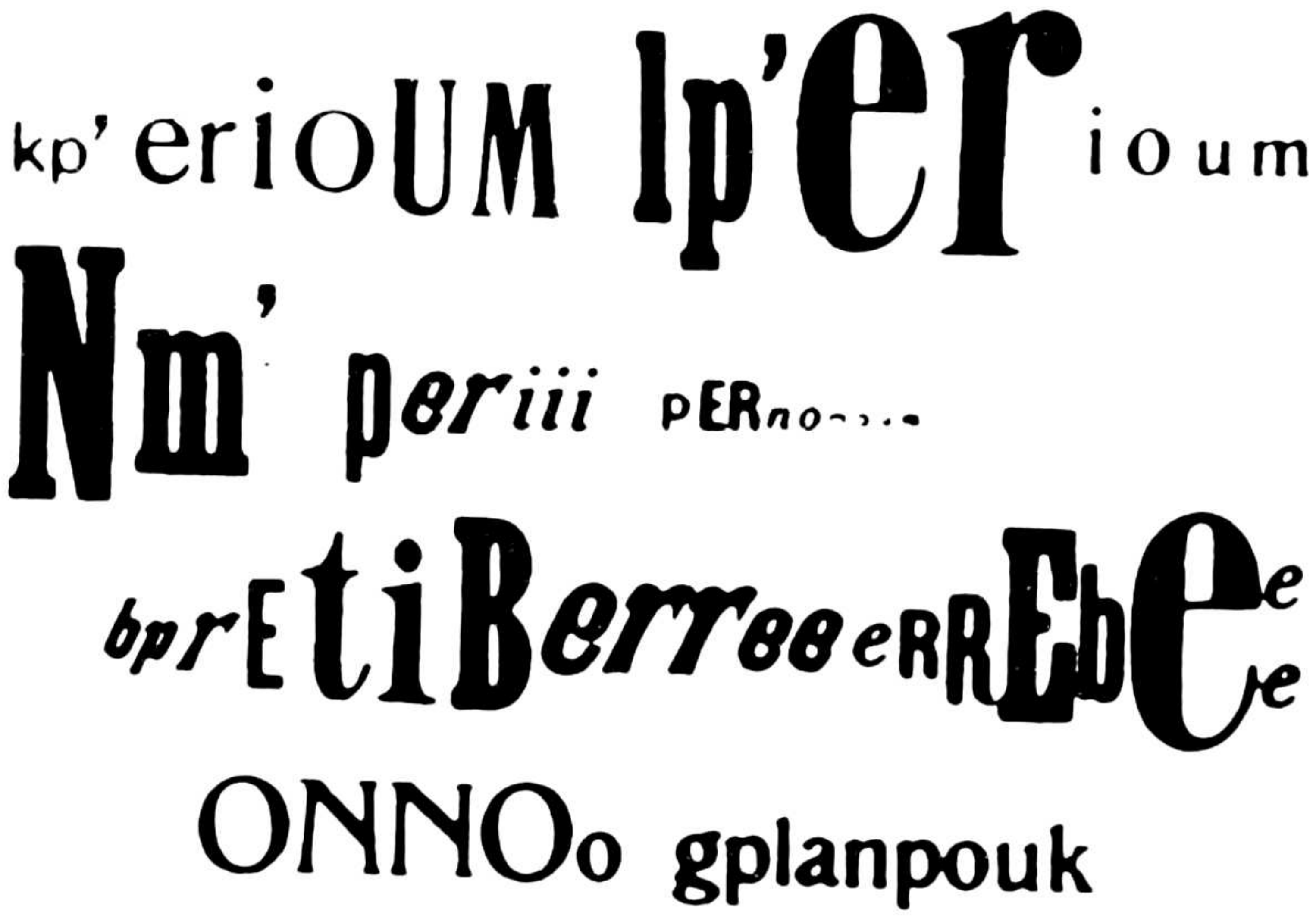
You're shitting bricks but I'm sweating blood.

Sound Effects

"What can the work of art do but follow again the path which goes from noise to the voice, from voice to speech, and from speech to the verb . . . in order always to recover the independence of sounds and to fix the thunderbolt of the univocal." In this apothegmic interrogation Gilles Deleuze establishes the vital coordinates of utterance and their seemingly predestined placements. From the Stoics we derive the germinal theory of the linguistic sign as a binary unit fusing a material transport with a nonmaterial freight. Words are bodies whose incorporeal "expressibles" are λεκτα [*lekta*]. Through subsequent historical configurations the linguistic sign has been established as a verbi-voco-visual cooperation, a balanced ensemble of meaning, sound, and shape. It would be erroneous, however, to consider this a stable confluence resilient under the impact of historical contingency or the creative isolations of its parts. An extreme case is Guillaume Postel, who in the *De originibus* (1553) argues that all sounds can be reduced to geometry. W. J. T. Mitchell identifies a "strong tendency for language to fall back into that which cannot be designated, the worldless realm of pure image and sound, and . . . this realm may have systematic features independent of language." The early twentieth-century preoccupation with abstraction produced in the linguistic arena the phenomenon of the sound poem, a concerted attempt to dissolve the linguistic sign and fix absolute attention on its ancillary rhythmic-acoustic properties, isolating its phonetic, subphonemic, and predenotative aspects and deploying them at the expense of any referential profit.

For Edmond Jabès, predenotational sound is itself a transit between two silences. "As if the transition from silence to silence could not be made without a groan." For Jabès—as for Virginia Woolf ("what is the use of painfully elaborating these consecutive sentences when what one needs is nothing consecutive but a bark, a groan?")—the issue of sound is one of existential value. Paul Valéry defines the poem as "a long-drawn hesitation between sound and sense"; but the consistent achievement in sound poetry is to withold the very initiation of that transit. (In semiotic terms, sound poems are expression-forms without a content-substance.) With this positive motivation of the *phōnē*, the sound poem can be accurately considered as a nonsemantic strategy within the instrumental economy of writing. As in the fashion system in Roland Barthes's account,[1] sound texts at their most exemplary are combinatory assemblages of vacant signifiers, written soundings of the profoundest intransitivity. Mike Weaver emphasizes their dynamic as an uncompromising temporality within performance. "In *phonetic* poems the figure (sound) rises off the ground (silence) producing a configuration of filled time against emptied time." English poet Glyn Pursglove goes so far as to claim that "[now] one 'writes' poetry with the voice, not even with words," linking his assertion to Charles Olson's view that the source of the poem is "down through the workings of [the poet's] throat to that place where breath comes from, where breath has its beginnings, where drama has to come from, where the coincidence is, all act springs." In extreme *instances (like the* cri-rhythmes *of François Dufrêne), these poems employ a language (and a writing) of pure affect. Central to Derrida's famous diagnosis of occidental logocentrism is his detection of an ideological bias that privileges speech over writing. (In the light of this insight, it is tempting to read the more extreme of the* bruitiste *texts as efforts to replace a phonocentrism with its own cacophonemic excretions.) However, in general, the sound texts we reproduce serve less to excommunicate than to problematize the site of meaning, and in the case of A. M. Bell (see "Spelling, Saving, Spending," p. 463 below) to inscribe the limits of the possible in articulate utterance.*

Despite the predominance of the sound dimension, the Lautgedicht *of European Dada was never a simple art based on the abstraction of the acoustic constituent, nor was it without its graphic accomplishments. The* phōnē, *in fact, was seldom considered independently of the written mark, so Dick Higgins can sensibly argue that sound poetry should be understood as analogous to pattern poetry. Indeed, the desire for an extralexical poetics (Hugo Ball's "poetry without words") precipitates a surprising, if not contradictory, preoccupation with the graphic system as notation. Ball's "Karawane" exploits the optical variety of numerous typefaces, while Raoul Hausmann's "optophonetic" poetry attempts a more rigorous and precise notation of the text's suprasegmental aspects (pitch, intonation, and volume), as in the following example:*[2]



kp' erioUM lp'er ioum
Nm' periii pERno-...
bprEtiBerreeeRREbeee
ONNOo gplanpouk

This collusion between graphic innovation and semantic exclusion characterizes most Dada and Futurist voco-textual experiments. The Futurist revolution in typography is one of its indisputably enduring achievements. With its heavy emphasis on soundplay (most especially the creation of military, industrial, and mechanical onomatopoeia by the deliberate distortion of words), the Italian Futurist agenda appears an attempt to achieve a more basic connection between objects and their verbal signs through the mimophonic efficacy of the sonic (a quality apparent in Giacomo Balla's "mechano-onomatopoeia"). In Ball, Scheerbart, and Gauvreau there is less a drive toward the abolition of the word than an attempt to actualize its plastic potential. Meaning goes on holiday but still retains its old address. It even sends a postcard. The shift to the semantic plane as the locus of the invisible grants to these poems an omnipresent possibility *to mean.*[3] *It will be salient to recall Marcel Duchamp's description of "the possible" as "only a physical 'corrosive' (like vitriol) that burns away all aesthetics and all callistics."*

Read xenographically, sound poems are texts whose meanings stridently defy comprehension. What Michel de Certeau says of glossolalia can be accurately applied to Dadaist and Futurist glossopoetics: "This fiction of language never ceases to be taken for a language and treated as such. It never ceases to be compelled *to mean something. It excites an impulse to decrypt and decipher which never wearies and which always supposes the organization of meaning lurking behind the series of sounds." To link Ball's poetry without words to cross-cultural glossolalia is a natural temptation. Both break with established sociolectal habits and imply a heterologic relationship between sound and meaning. Like glossolalia and John Dee's Enochian Calls, the poems of Scheerbart, Ball, and Morgenstern remain at least a simulacra of language and stay within the purlieu of semantics. Yet in their precarious placement of "meaning" they can be proposed as imaginative breaks from a theory of convention, and as a partial realization of a language of unmediated natural emission. Hugo Ball's description of his first performance (occurring on the same day that the* Course in General Linguistics *of Saussure was first published) suggests a basal connection of sonorous material to the somatic prerequisites of performance: "Nowhere are the weaknesses of a poem revealed as much as in a public reading. One thing is certain: art is joyful only as long as it has richness and life. Reciting aloud has become the touchstone of the quality of the poem for me, and I have learned (from the stage) to what extent today's literature is worked out as a problem at a desk and is made for the spectacles of the collector instead of for the ears of living human beings." The sacerdotal, even shamanistic underpinnings of Ball's* lautgedichte *are clearly evident in the program notes accompanying his first sound poetry performance at Zurich's Cabaret Voltaire. "In these phonetic poems we totally renounce the language that journalism has abused and corrupted. We must return to the innermost alchemy of the word, we must even give up the word too, to keep poetry for its last and holiest refuge."*

A festive potlatch on the ruins of Modernism? Or an innermost alchemy of the word? There is an alternative approach to the sound poem's conventional genealogy through Dada and Futurism, an approach that connects umbilically to what Julia Kristeva terms a subject-in-process, and Lyotard a libidinal economy. Rather than focus on the poem's connections to artistic discourse and changing aesthetic paradigms, this approach emphasizes the Freudian and Lacanian implications in current semiology. Revisioning Nietzsche's famous agonistic binary of the Apollonian and Dionysian, Kristeva proposes a double disposition in all language toward both a symbolic and a semiotic order. The symbolic *is that tendency within the linguistic subject toward naming, predication, order, and the thetic. In opposition is the* semiotic *disposition to assert libidinal and prelinguistic drives as a propulsion* through *language. In Kristeva's terms, the sound poem maximizes the semiotic at the expense (and perhaps obliteration) of the symbolic. Complementing Kristeva's theory is Jean-François Lyotard's insistence that the entire phonological system belongs to a "libidinal body." Georges Bataille offers access to a less dualistic theorizing of the sound poem than that prompted by Kristeva. For Bataille, the sound poem would register as the unavoidable excess within a phonocentric apparatus, recovered from libido as a symbolic gesture of outlay and meaningless* *expenditure, according to which Ball's verse without words would constitute the "parte maudite" of literature—the heterological object thrown out from all scriptoral* poiesis.

Jean-Jacques Lecercle contrasts the dictionary to the scream, the former's abstract systematicity and trenchant instrumentality to the latter's materiality, affectivity, and instinctual release. The scream constitutes material *language which, working against the transcendental systematicity of* abstract *language, manifests as "unsystematic, a series of noises, private to individual speakers, not meant to promote communication, and therefore self-contradictory, 'impossible' like all 'private languages'." Lecercle calls the contradiction precipitated by the collision of these two languages* délire, *a pervasive force that "dissolves the subject, threatens to engulf the reader in its disaster, yet saves him—and the text—at the last moment, by preserving an appearance of order, a semblance of linguistic organization." In Charles Callet's speculative origins of language we find material language returning to a primary order, just as in the poems of Ball, Schwitters, Morgenstern, and Gauvreau we are promised the disruptive force of* délire *if, or whenever, the safe typography of the printed text explodes into the sonorous intensities of performance. Thought of as a sonic* délire, *as acoustic materiality, as a pulsion of the semiotic order, or as the phonic-rhythmic manifestations of libido, these sound poems remain comprehensible as an agonistic struggle between structured semiosis and eruptive materiality.*

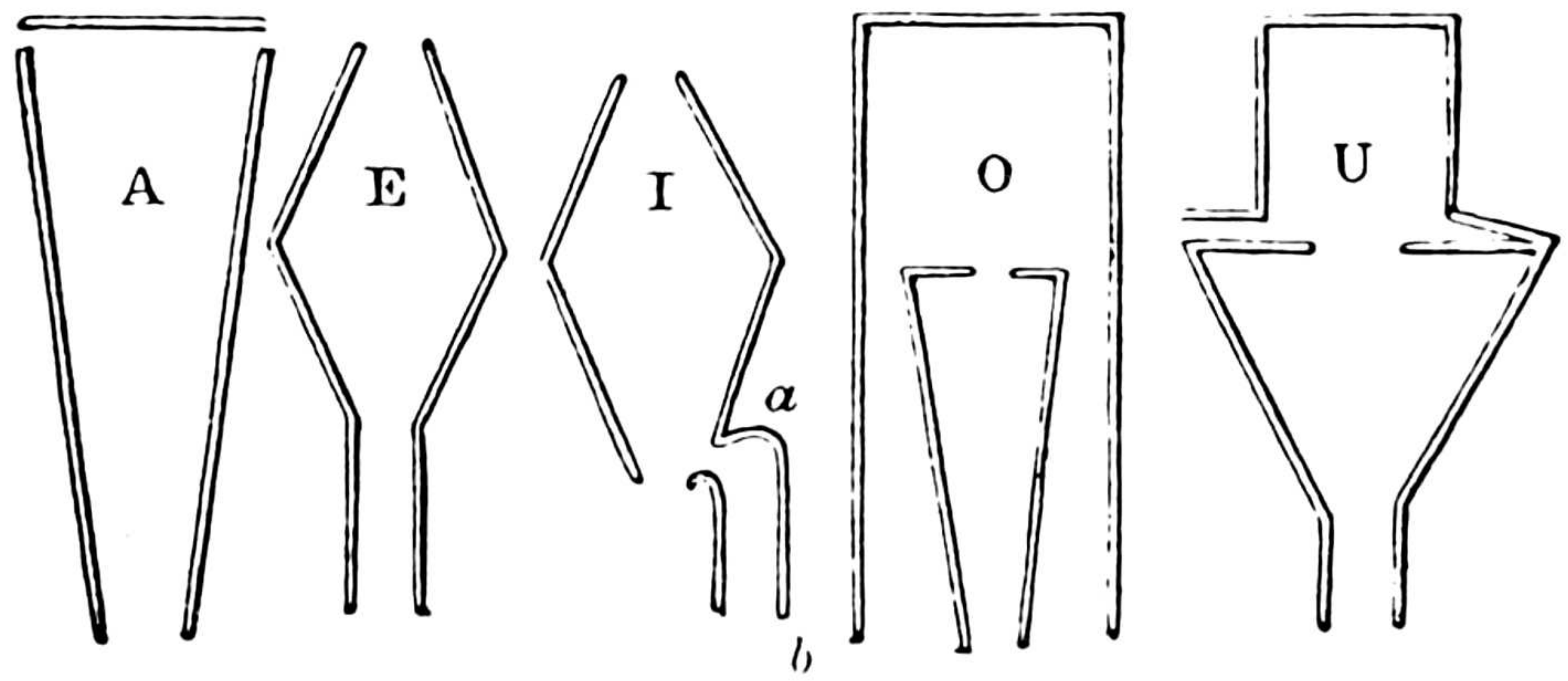
1 For Barthes, fashion is a "machine for maintaining meaning without ever fixing it, it is forever a disappointed meaning, but it is nevertheless a meaning: without content, it then becomes the spectacle human beings grant themselves of their power to make the insignificant signify; Fashion then appears as an exemplary form of the general act of signification, thus rejoining the very being of literature, which is to offer to read not the meaning of things but their signification: hence it becomes the sign of the 'properly human'."

2 Raoul Hausmann developed "optophonetics" in 1918, utilizing variations in type size to indicate proportional variations in pitch and volume. He argues that "the poem is an act consisting of respiratory and auditive combinations, firmly tied to a unit of duration. . . . In order to express these elements typographically . . . I had used letters of varying sizes and thicknesses which thus took on the character of musical notation. Thus the optophonetic poem was born. The optophonetic and the phonetic poem are the first step towards totally non-representational, abstract poetry." Like Marinetti's *parole in libertà,* optophonetics draws directly upon the advanced possibilities of early twentieth-century typography and display type.

3 Several linguists (Jakobson and Mukarovsky included) have lent credence to the presence of a fundamental human tendency to convert all phonetic into phonemic material. Presented with an unintelligible utterance or text (such as Gauvreau's *Jappements,* or Scheerbart's sound poem), the reader will immediately transphonologize it into a context assimilable to her or his individual linguistic habits. These linguistic arguments, then, appear to essentialize a psychological disposition to recovery and construction. This is also the case with Ernst Jandl's *Stanzen* (1992), which forcibly submits German orthography to Austrian dialect, creating texts that appear consonant with the abstract values of sound poetry.

Erasmus Darwin

Grandfather of the more famous Charles, Erasmus Darwin (1731–1802) was a prolific poet and scientist. Among his numerous inventions were a horizontal windmill, a water closet (with flushing mechanism activated by opening and closing the door), a telescopic candlestick, and a rocket engine. Prior to constructing his speaking machine, Darwin proposed a new theory of phonetics. Abandoning the alphabet as misleading, he proposed four classes of speech sounds: vowels (clear and continuous); sibilants (hissing); semi-vocals (a mixture of the previous two); and consonants (interrupted). His machine created a sensation when first exhibited in 1770, and entrepreneur Mathew Boulton challenged Darwin to build a mechanism "capable of pronouncing the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and Ten Commandments in the Vulgar Tongue." Darwin's machine responds to an ancient preoccupation with mechanical replication of the human voice. His predecessors include Marin Mersenne, who in 1635 was working on a system of organ pipes that could pronounce syllables, and a pocket-sized panharmonic speech-organ replete with five keyboards. Eighteenth-century pioneers in the field include the Abbé Mical, Wolfgang von Kempelen, and C. G. Kratzenstein, who won the Academy prize in St. Petersburg in 1779 for a talking head that could pronounce the word "exploitation." Kratzenstein's mechanical pipes for producing the five vowels are displayed in the following illustration.



The aspirations of this legion of inventors were not fully realized until 1877, when public acclaim transformed Thomas Edison into "the wizard of Menlo Park" (and prototype of Baum's wizard of Oz). The American inventor was promptly given a literary apotheosis in the 1885 novel L'Eve future *by the comte de Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, in which a female android is outfitted with a pair of phonographs in place of lungs, supplied with hours of sublime discourse purchased at great cost from the leading poets,* *novelists, and metaphysicians of the day. The tradition of mechanical vocalism provokes a return to the sheer materiality of sound and its extrahuman potential as artificially engineered speech. It also petitions comparison with the physiologically grounded language conjectures of van Helmont ("Transpositions," p. 231 below) and de Brosses ("Spelling, Saving, Spending," p. 456).*

Pronunciation Machine

I many years ago gave considerable attention to this subject for the purpose of improving shorthand; at that time I contrived a wooden mouth with lips of soft leather, and with a valve over the back part of it for nostrils, both which could be quickly opened or closed by the pressure of the fingers, the vocality was given by a silk ribbon about an inch long and a quarter of an inch wide stretched between two bits of smooth wood a little hollowed; so that when a gentle current of air from bellows was blown on the edge of the ribbon, it gave an agreeable tone, as it vibrated between the wooden sides, much like a human voice. This head pronounced the p, b, m, and the vowel a, with so great nicety as to deceive all who heard it unseen, when it pronounced the words mama, papa, map, and pam; and had a most plaintive tone, when the lips were gradually closed. My other occupations prevented me from proceeding in the further construction of this machine; which might have required but thirteen movements, as shown in the above analysis, unless some variety of musical note was to be added to the vocality produced in the larynx; all of which movements might communicate with the keys of a harpsichord or forte piano, and perform the song as well as the accompaniment; or which if built in a gigantic form, might speak so loud as to command an army or instruct a crowd.

Alexander Melville Bell

Oral Gymnastics

Pronounce each of the following difficult combinations of syllables five or six times without any superfluous motion of the articulating organs. Vary the accents and tones.

ip it, ip ik, it ik, it ip, ik it, ik ip.
ip it ip, ip ik ip, it ik it, it ip it, ik it ik, ik ip ik.
ip it ik, ip ik it, it ip ik, it ik ip, ik it ip, ik ip it.
ip it it ip, ip ik ik ip, it ik ik it, it ip ip it, ik it it ik, ik ip ip ik.

ip if, if ip, it ith, ith it, if ith, ith if.
ip if ip, if ip if, it ith it, ith it ith, if ith if, ith if ith.
ip if if ip, if ip ip if, it ith ith it, ith it it ith, if ith ith if, ith if if ith

ith iss, iss ith, ith ish, ish ith, iss ish, ish iss.
ith iss ith, iss ith iss, ith ish ith, ish ith ish, iss ish iss, ish iss ish.
ith iss ish, ith ish iss, iss ith ish, iss ish ith, ish iss ith, ish ith iss.
ith iss iss ith, iss ith ith iss, ith ish ish ith, ish ith ith ish, iss ish ish iss, ish iss iss ish.

im in, in im, in ing, ing in, im ing, ing im.
im in im, in im in, in ing in, ing in ing, im ing im, ing im ing.
im in ing, im ing in, in im ing, in ing im, ing in im, ing im in.
im in in im, in im im in, in ing ing in, ing in in ing, im ing ing im, ing im im ing.

in il, il in, ib iv, iv ib, im iv, iv im.
in il in, il in il, ib iv ib, iv ib iv, im iv im, iv im iv.
in il il in, il in in il, ib iv iv ib, iv ib ib iv, im iv iv im, iv im im iv.

ve we, we ve, re le, le re, re ne, ne re.
ve we ve, we ve we, re le re, le re le, re ne re, ne re ne.
re le ne, re ne le, le re ne, le ne re, ne le re, ne re le.
ve we we ve, we ve ve we, re le le re, le re re le, re ne ne re, ne re re ne.

pip tit, pip kik, tit pip, tit kik, kik tit, kik pip.
pit kit, pik tik, tip kip, tik pik, kit pit, kip tip.
pit pik, pik pit, tip tik, tik tip, kit kip, kip kit.

thith sis, thith shish, sis thith, sis shish, shish sis, shish thith.
this shis, thish sish, sith shith, sish thish, shis this, shith sith.
this thish, thish this, sith sish, sish sith, shith shis, shis shith.

lil nin, nin lil, mim nin, nin mim, min lin, lin min.
rin lin, lin rin, nil ril, ril nil, rin ril, ril rin.
nirrin linnil, nirril rinnil, rillin lirrin, nillin lirril.

Aristophanes

In The Birds *Aristophanes uses sound less to evoke an interspecies contrast than to parody Socratic discourse. In* Ancient Literacy *Harris notes that Aristophanes' play stages a conscious depreciation of the written when he brings in "fraudulent oracles with emphasis on the fact that they are in writing." Along with a short passage in* The Frogs *("Brekk kekk koax koak"), it is one of the earliest recorded examples of onomatopoeia. Below is a compilation of the bird-talk distributed throughout the play.*

From *The Birds*

Hi! Hoopoe! Yoo-hoe!
Hoop-ahoy! Hoop-hip a-hoop-hip-ahoy!
Tio tio tio tio
Tio tio tio tio
Trio to trio to totobrix
Toro toro toro torotix
Tio tio tio tinx
Trio trio trio totobrix
Epopoi
Poi
Popoi
Torotorotorotorotix
Kikkabau kikkabau
Torotorotorotorolililix
Tio tio tiotinx
Tototo tototo totototinx
Tio tio tio tiotinx
Tio tio tiotinx
Tototo tototo totototinx
Tio tio tio tiotinx

Da beega steeck!

Anonymous

This entry in the anonymous Encyclopedia Da Costa *(see our note on "Erotism" in "Communities," p. 74) lampoons Isidore Isou's lettristic poetry, despite the apparently honorific reference.*

Expression

Bird song being, as we know, of Orphic origin, it is perfectly legitimate to consider it as a properly human means of expression. What, in fact, would remain of it if men did not exist to hear and interpret it? True bird song is that which the poets (sic) untiringly sing but, among those latter, daring innovators no longer hesitate to substitute for classical paraphrase in plain language a literal transcription according to the principal principle set forth by Charles Dickens in the Animal Alphabet. In this way Lenz has noted eighteen different songs of the chaffinch, to which he gave distinct names. Here are the main ones:

1. The Schmalkalde reduplication: *tzitzitzitzitzitzi tzitzitzitzitzitzirrrrenttzaipiah, tolololozisss-coutziah.* This song is, as we can see, interrupted by a pause and ends in a ringing manner.

2. The piercing song of wine: *tzitzitzi-willillilltih, dappldappldappl de wingihai.*

3. The unpleasant song of wine: *tzitzitzitzi-llillillrllillisjibsjibsjbsj iwihdrai.*

4. Pine-oil: *tzitzitzitzitzirrrrezwoifzwoifzwoifzoiffihdrai.*

5. The crazy happy-new-year: *titititititi totozaipeutziah.*

6. The happy-new-year in Harz: *tzitziwillwilwillwillsaispeutziah.*

7. The common happy-new-year: *tzitzitzitziwihaiwihaiwihaizaispeutziah.*

8. The common cavalcade: *tzitzitzitzirrrrihtjobjobjobairoitihe.*

9. The cavalier: *tzitzitzitzitzitzizullullull-iobjobjobjaireitjah.*

10. The glass: *tzitzizeutzeuzeuwollillilli-woftziah.*

Certain remarks have also been made on the subject of sparrows. These creatures, chatterers if ever there be such, utter a *dieb, dieb* when flying, and *schlip, schlip* when they are perched. At rest, or when eating, we hear a continual repeating *bilp* or *bioum* is always audible. *Durr* and *di, di, di* are their cries of tenderness. *Terr,* pronounced forcibly and rolling the *rr* indicates the approach of a danger. If the danger increases, they utter a cry which can be noted: *teltereltelteltel.* When the time comes for fights for possession of the females, the males emit the sounds *tel, tel, spli, del, del, dieb, schlik* etc., which pour from their throats in a noise often deafening and disagreeable.

This notation of bird song is very difficult to understand. It is, however, very widespread in works on ornithology. We give here a few examples which are of interest in showing how birds assemble letters.

The tree-creeper pours forth a vivacious *tsig-tsig, tsig-tsig.*

The missel-thrush: *trai-trai, trai-trai.*

The magpie: *plieu, plieu.*

The amorous chaffinch sings: *tchi-tchi-tchi-rah-i-ts. . . iu.* To which the female responds: *si-si-si,* and together they repeat *trr-trr-trr.*

Cry of the female oriole: *yoo-yio-yo-o.*

The male oriole begins with *hi-de-lu* and continues *hi-de-lu-a-i-a.*

The song of the nightingale was noted by Dureau de La Malle thus:

Tinu, tinu, tinu, tiau
Spretiu, z-qua,
Querrec, pi, pi,
Tid, tio, tio, tix,
Qutio, qutio, qutio, qu'-tio,
Zquo, zquo, zquo, zquo
Zi, zi, zi, zi, zi, zi, zi,
Querrer, tiu, aquiz, pi, pi, qui.

As long ago as 1787, the journal *Les Affiches de Senlis* had provided this phonic reproduction of the nightingale's song:

Tiuu, tiuu, tiuu, tiuu,
Lpay tiuu zqua;
Quorror pipu
Tio, tio, tio, tio, tix;
Qutio, qutio, qutio, qutio,
Zquo, zquo, zquo, zquo,
Zi, zi, zi, zi, zi, zi, zi,
Quorror tiuu zqua pipiqui.

Spoken by an Italian, this imitation is, it seems remarkable. Professor Isidore Isou is a past master at this kind of exercise.

Translated by Iain White

Paul Scheerbart

Theorist, amateur architect, and novelist, Scheerbart (1863–1915) produced three dozen science fiction and cosmic fantasy novels, the best known being Lesabendio*—presenting an ecotopia in which the characters bear sonorous names, evocative of infant babbling: Sofanti, Labu, Biba, Bimbina. Scheerbart's treatise on glass architecture,* Glasarchitektur *(1914), had a considerable influence on the theory and practice of architect Bruno Taut. Scheerbart's utopian work was equally significant for Walter Benjamin, informing his own glass architecture project, the* Passagen-Werk. *The poem below is Scheerbart's only pure sound poem and appears in* Ein Eisenbahnroman, ich liebe dich *(A Railway Novel, I Love You) of 1900. In the light of Scheerbart's architectural theories, might not the poem be read (or sounded) less as an opaque facade of nonsense than as an unmediated communication of pure acoustic transparency?*

Kikakoku!

Kikakoku!
Ekoralaps!

Wîso kollipánda opolôsa.
Ipasatta îh fûo.
Kikakokú proklínthe petêh.
Nikifilí mopa Léxio intipáschi benakáffro — própsa pî! própsa pî!
Jasóllu nosaréssa flípsei.
Aukarótto passakrússar Kikakokú.
Núpsa púsch?
Kikakokú bulurú?
Futupúkke — própsa pî!
Jasóllu . . . .

Christian Morgenstern

Morgenstern's serious poetry, with its indebtedness to Rudolf Steiner's theosophical ideas, has been compared to Rilke and Hofmannsthal in its spiritual and mystical qualities. It is ironic then to recall that the slender volume Galgenlieder *(*Gallows Songs*) penned in the 1890s as a respite from his serious poetry, was the work that gained Morgenstern lasting popularity and fame. While the* Galgenlieder *offer rich rewards in high nonsense and wordplay, it is only in "Das grosse Lalulā" and "Fisches Nachtgesang" that the poet ventures into nonsemantic areas. A precursor of the Dada poem-without-words, the Great Lalula is purportedly written in a language invented by Morgenstern in his high school days, predating his interest in phonetics, linguistics, and the artificial language of Volapük. He described the poem as a "phonetic rhapsody," the reflections of "a highly personal, youthful* Uebermut, *which enjoys combinations that are very common among children, but are regarded as bizarre when encountered among adults."*

Das Grosse Lalulā

Kroklokwafzi? Sem̄emem̄i!
Seiokrontro — prafriplo:
Bifzi, bafzi; hulalem̄i:
quasti basti bo . . .
Lalu, lalu lalu lalu la!

Hontraruru miromente
zasku zes rü rü?
Entepente, leiolente
klekwapufzi lü?
Lalu lalu lalu lalu la!

Simarar kos malzipempu
silzuzankunkrei (;)!
Marjomar dos: Quempu Lempu
Siri Suri Sei [ ]!
Lalu lalu lalu lalu la!

Gertrude Stein

From *In*

(I no B) Because in.
Because in on o.
Because in on o shall.
Because in on o shall low set long.
Because in on o
Because in. Because in on o shall.
Because in on o shall low.
Because in on o shall low say by. Because in
on o shall low say be see o. Because in. Because
in on o shall low see see o. Because in see
see see see o shall see be be be be see o.

(Extra M) Mate and hen, is hen. Mat and is and in, Mat
and is and in and in and is and in. and. Mat and.

(Extra M, and M) Heat go and back, Heat go and back lea. Heat
go and back leak back leak back blister. Heat
go and back. Heat go and back leak and blister
heat go and back heat and leak and blister.
Heat go and heat go and back, and heat go
and back, heat, and go, and back, heat.

Carry

Fed in an f e d this makes a color sure.

Fed in fed makes a pleasant shoulder with it.

Cup back, cup back the swing, cup back in swing. To rent. To makes u. To makes u so glass. Rest. less.

Rest less, rest less in stephens regular hand book, rest less that makes a curve a curve has v, v is c that is to say rest has not t, not in tea, not in t. Rest has in s s.

Hugo Ball

The inauguration of Dada under Hugo Ball's leadership at Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich, 1916, is legendary; but the legend has preserved mainly the wacky irreverence and calculated affrontery. Inasmuch as Ball may be credited with inventing sound poetry, the contributing elements are worth recalling. Opposing the militarism of his native Germany, he was living in exile as a pacifist. Yet his sense of artistic conscience was so acute that he attributed the war to a corruption of language: "without doubt it is we, the poets and thinkers, who are to blame for this bloodbath and who have to atone for it." Dada emerged as ritual purification: "the only thing left is the joke and the bloody pose," he laments. "The dadaist . . . is still so convinced of the unity of all beings, of the totality of all things, that he suffers from the dissonances to the point of self-disintegration." Ball's Dada recitations were not satire, but prelude to devotional transfiguration: overcome by the liturgical cadences that emerged while declaiming "Labadas Gesang an die Wolken," he left the Cabaret behind. A month later, in July 1916, Ball made a valedictory appearance with fellow Dadaists, presenting a manifesto that repudiated vanguard art-making while associating his own spiritual aspirations with the ancient Gnostics. "I want words . . . that are seven yards long. Mr. Schultz's words are only two and a half centimeters long." Ball's reference is to Wolfgang Schultz's Dokumente der Gnosis *(1910), which includes a vocabulary of recitational formulae that reads like a toolkit for sound poetry:*

DANUP CHRANTOR BERBALIBARBITHI IAO
ABORCHBAO CHRAMMAOTH PROARBATH IAO
AAA EEE OOO SABAOTH ARBATH IAO ZAGURE
ANOK BIATHIARBARBERBIRSILATUBUPHRUMTROM
THORIOBRITITAMMAORAGGADRIOIRDAGGAROAMMATITIRBOIROTH

(For an additional extract, see Marcus the Valentinian in "Cosmology," p. 335 below.) Ball returned to Gnostic incantations in his 1927 book Byzantinisches Christentum, *in which he cites Jesus's glossolalia from the* Pistis Sophia *(offered by Eugene Jolas to readers of* transition *22): "aeä iuo iao aoi oia psinoter ternops nopsiter zagura pagura netmomaoth nepsiomaoth marachachta tobarabbau tarnachachau zorokotora ieoü sabaoth." For Ball, Dada was not prelude to Gnosis but inherently gnostic: "There is a gnostic sect whose initiates were so stunned by the image of the* childhood *of Jesus that they lay down in a cradle and let themselves be suckled by women and swaddled. The dadaists are similar babes-in-arms of a new age." Sharing his friend Kandinsky's spiritual orientation, Ball was predisposed to a similar view of Dada. He quoted approvingly Novalis's dictum "Linguistic theory is the dynamic of the spiritual world." Theory and practice came together in 1916 with poems like "Caravan."*

KARAWANE

jolifanto bambla ô falli bambla
grossiga m'pfa habla horem
égiga goramen
higo bloiko russula huju
hollaka hollala
anlogo bung
blago bung
blago bung
bosso fataka
ü üü ü
schampa wulla wussa ólobo
hej tatta gôrem
eschige zunbada
wulubu ssubudu uluw ssubudu
tumba ba- umf
kusagauma
ba - umf

Giacomo Balla

Balla is primarily known as the foremost Italian Futurist painter. Following the spirit of Luigi and Antonio Russolo's "art of noise" and in accordance with Marinetti's insistence that machinic sound creates a lyrical expression, Balla's "onomatopoeic noise canzone *for typewriter" is scored for twelve voices simultaneously reading the twelve sections of the poem.*

Onomatopea Rumorista Macchina Tipografica

Dodici persone
ognuno ripetere per un minuto di seguito
le seguenti onomatopee rumoriste

1° settesettesettesettesettesette
2° nennenennenennenennenennenenne
3° vùùùùmmùùvùùùùùmmùùvùù
4° tè.tè.tè.tè.tè.tè.tè.tè.tè.tè.tè.tè.tè.
5° miaaaaaanavaò,miaaaaaanavanò
6° sta---sta---sta---sta---sta
7° lalalalalalalalalalalalalalalalalala
8° ftftftftftftftftftftftftftft
9° riòriòrièrièriòriòrièrièriòriòrièrièriòriò
10° scscscscscspsspscscscscspssps
11° vèvèvèvèvèvèvèvèvèvèvèvèvèvèvè
12° nunnnònònunnnònònunnnònònunnnònò

Canzone di Maggio

1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1
TITATÒ TITATÒ
TITATÌ TITATÒ

FIORE??

TITA TITA TITA **TI**
TI TI TI TI TI TI TI
TO toi toi toi **TO**

. . . .

ZAP ZEP ZUP ZUP ZIFF ZIFP

ZIP ZI

ZAFP ZAFF ZIPP ZIPP ZUPP ZUF ZIP ZÙ

1 1 1 1 1 1

. . . .

Pierre Albert-Birot

As an editor and publisher, Albert-Birot (1885–1967) was responsible for the important Dada review SIC *(standing for "sounds, ideas, colors"), hand-printed and distributed free of charge to soldiers on the western front during World War I. A friend of Guillaume Apollinaire (he produced the latter's play* Les mamelles de Tirésias*), Albert-Birot concurrently produced numerous examples of the calligram format which has been predominantly associated with Apollinaire.*

Poème à Crier et à Danser

POÈME À CRIER ET À DANSER

(Essai de poésie pure)

CHANT I

an an an an an an an an
an an an
iiii i i
pouh pouh pouh pouh rrra
sl sl sl
drrrrrr oum oum
an an an an
aaa aaa aaa tzinn
iii iiiii
ha ha ha ha ha ha ha
rrrrrrrrrrrrr é

CHANT II

vrron ——on——on——on——on——on[1]
vrrr vrrr vrrr
hihihi
ouououitt
ouououitt
ouououitt
trrra trrra trrra trrra trrra
trrratrrra trrratrrra
hihihihihihihihihihihihihihihihihihihihihihi
vrrr vrrr
ouaouaouaouaouaouaouaouaouaouaouaoua[2]
iiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii[2]
ouououitt
ouououitt
ouououitt
vrr vrr
iiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii[2]

CHANT III

êêêê èèè éé
a ouou a ouou êê
bing————————bing————————[1]
brrrrr——————brrrrrrrrr[1] tzinnn
ô————ô————ôôô[1]
a iii a iii a iii i i i
âo âo âo âo âo âo âo tzinnn
âo âo âo âo âo âo âo tzinnn
rrrrrrrrrrrrr rrrrrrrrrrr
rrrrrrrrrrrr
ouououououououououououououououououou[2]
uuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu[3]
i

---

[1] Extend sound.

[2] Place hand valve-like over mouth.

[3] Cup hand.

Vicente Huidobro

First published in 1931, Altazor *is the undisputed masterpiece of Vicente Huidobro (1893–1948). Through seven cantos it describes its hero—Altazor (high hawk) the anti-poet—in a wild plunge through space and time. The human conflagration is accompanied by linguistic consummation too: as the fall through space quickens, so does the kinetics of Huidobro's language. Neologisms and portmanteau forms increase, plunging to a final conclusion in presemantic sound: "io ia / i i i o / Ai a i ai a i i i i o ia." There is something in this dynamic descent that asks comparison not only to an Einsteinian version of Icarus, but to the fall of atoms and their minimal swerves in Lucretius's poem* De rerum natura *(see "Clinamen," p. 539 below). Born in Chile, Huidobro spent his adult life in Barcelona and Paris in the company of Picasso, Arp, Reverdy, Apollinaire, and the youthful Borges.*

From *Altazor*

There's no time to lose
Look here swoops the monochronic swallow
With an antipodal tone of approaching distance
Here swoops the swallowing swallow
At the horislope of the mountizon
The violonswallow with a cellotail
Slipped down this morning from a lunawing
And hurries near
Look here swoops the swooping swallow
Here swoops the whooping wallow
Here swoops the weeping wellow
Look here swoops the sweeping shrillow
Swoops the swamping shallow
Swoops the sheeping woolow
Swoops the slooping swellow
Look here swoops the sloping spillow
The scooping spellow
The souping smellow
The seeping swillow

The sleeping shellow
Look here swoops the swooping day
And the night retracts its claws like a leopard
Swoops the swapping swallow
With a next in each of the torrid zones
As I have them on the four horizons
Swoops the snooping smallow
And waves rise on tiptoe
Swoops the whelping whirllow
And the mountain's head feels dizzy
Swoops the slapping squallow
And the wind's a parabola of orgiastic sylphs
The telephone wires fill with notes
The sunset sleeps head under the sheets
And the tree with a feverish pulse

But the sky prefers the nigh*do*ngale
Its favorite son the nigh*re*ngale
Its flower of joy the nigh*mi*ngale
Its skin of tears the nigh*fa*ngale
Its nocturnal throat the nigh*so*ngale
The nigh*la*ngale
The nigh*ti*ngale

Translated by Eliot Weinberger

Kurt Schwitters

Schwitters expounds his poetics in a 1924 essay "Consistent Poetry." The original material of poetry is the letter, not the word (a tenet later extended by Isidore Isou). In the printed text sound is ambiguous, being dependent on the imaginative faculty of the reader. Sound, moreover, "can only be material for the performance and not for the poetry." Sound poetry is "consistent . . . when it is created in public performance and is not written down." His chef d'oeuvre *is the* Sonata in Urlauten *(also known as the "Ur-Sonata"). Almost thirty pages, and requiring about thirty-five minutes to perform, this is the most ambitious of early twentieth-century sound poems. Scored in part with musical symbols, it is based on seed sound-motifs derived from Raoul Hausmann (themselves set out originally in purely graphic form as display-type samples, according to Schwitters). The "Ur-Sonata" is a fitting complement to Schwitters's prodigious and more famous body of collages (in a form he named "Merz" Dada), and merits comparison for its scope and ambition with such contemporaneous (albeit dissimilar) works as* The Waste-Land *by T. S. Eliot or* Altazor *by Vicente Huidobro. While an excerpt of Schwitters performing a small section of the poem has long been available, the recent discovery of a recording of the author's complete performance has been issued on the German label Wergo.*

From *Sonata in Urlauten*

second movement:

largo

(*performed to a regular measure, tempo a precise 4/4. each successive line is spoken a quarter tone lower than the last, therefore the piece should start proportionately*)
Ooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo (*soft*) **(J)** **6**
Bee bee bee bee bee ––– ––– –––
Ooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo
Zee zee zee zee ––– ––– –––
Ooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

Rinnzekete --- bee --- bee ---
Oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo
änn ze --- --- änn ze --- ---
Oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

……

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa (*loud*) (K) 7
Bee bee bee bee bee --- --- ---
Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa
Zee zee zee zee zee --- --- ---
Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa
Rinnzekete --- bee --- bee ---
Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa
Enn ze --- --- enn ze --- ---
Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa

……

Oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo (*soft*) (L) 6
Bee bee bee bee bee --- --- ---
Oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo
Zee zee zee zee zee --- --- ---
Oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo
Rinnzekete --- bee --- bee ---
Oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo
änn ze --- --- änn ze --- ---
Oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

……

Translated by Jerome Rothenberg and Pierre Joris

Robert Desnos

Desnos began writing poetry as a Surrealist but broke away from the movement, finding it too limiting. During World War II he was active in the Resistance. Arrested by the Gestapo in 1944 and imprisoned in Buchenwald, Desnos died of typhus shortly after liberation in May 1945. In "Rrose Sélavy, etc." he pays homage to one of Marcel Duchamp's pseudonyms, employing the artist's own favorite idiom, the homonymic pun. He claimed the poem arose from telepathic communication with Duchamp (in New York at the time). In Desnos's text the name itself becomes the template for permutational phrasal offspring.

Rrose Sélavy, etc.

Rose aisselle a vit.
Rr'ose, essaie là, vit.
Rôts et sel à vie.
Rose S, L, have I.
Rosée, c'est la vie.
Rrose scella vît.
Rrose sella vît.
Rrose sait la vie.
Rose, est-ce, hélas, vie?
Rrose aise héla vît.
Rrose est-ce, aile, est-ce elle?
  est celle
    AVIS

{rose/pink} armpit has lives [= verb form]
Rr'ose [ose = dare] {try/tries} there, lives
{roasts/burp} and salt for life
Rose S, L have I
Dew, that is life
Rrose [homonymically suggesting "eros"] sealed saw
  [*vît,* the imperfect subjunctive of
  voir = to see]
Rrose saddled saw [*vit* as above]
Rrose knows life
Rose, is it, alas, life?
Rose ease hailed saw [*vît* as above]
Rrose is it wing, is it she?
  is that one
    {notice/announcement/opinion}

Translated by Stephanie Nutting

Louis Aragon

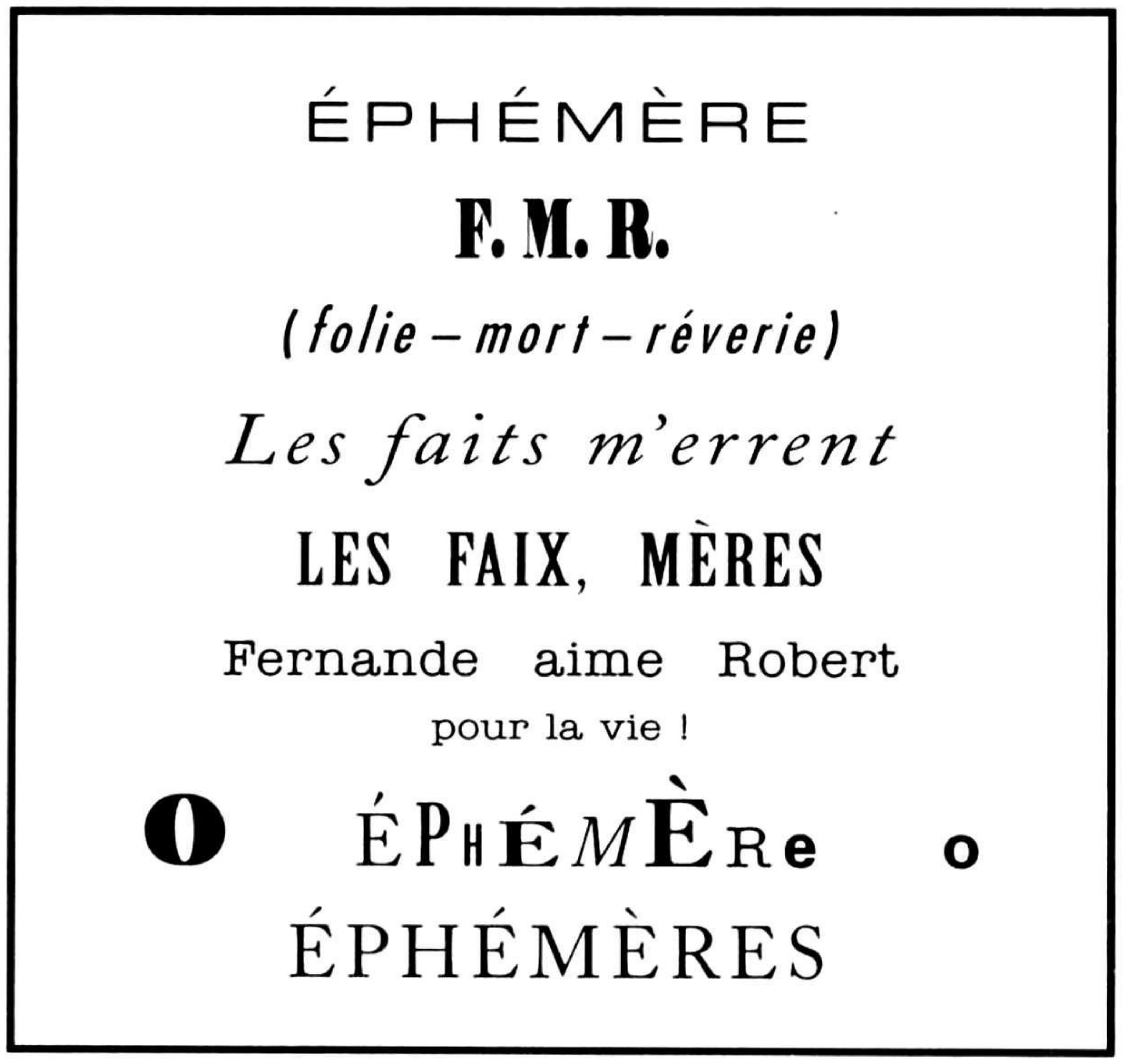
Throughout his life Aragon showed an attraction to simplicity and a fascination with both the pitfalls and the potentials of language. (One poem, "Suicide," consists of the alphabet signed by the poet.) Aragon's artistic passage is not untypical of early twentieth-century writers: an inauguration into Dada, a shift into and through Surrealism to the embrace of Communism in the 1930s. Celebrating the dizziness and marvels of a circumambient world, his Paris Peasant *exudes a youthful Surrealist "vertige du moderne" (figured in the novel as a labyrinth without a Minotaur). The mandate to activate in writing the political revolt against all limitations haunts his practice, yet Aragon's resignation to the stubborn autonomy of poetic language comes through eloquently in this passage from "Le chambre du Don Quixote" (published in the journal* Cannibal *in April 1920):*

. . . each word is no longer
What it began as
It says something other than what it says
. . . each vocable carries
Beyond itself a sense of falling a revelatory force
Where the unsaid pierces into what I say
Where the carriage of the words is stronger than
the dreams preceding them.

Aragon's important theoretical ideas can be found in Traité du style *(1928).*

F.M.R.

What are these sentimental murmurings I begin to hear? Can the orchestra stalls be taking themselves for musicians? I endorse all of mankind's inclinations, and for example I endorse his liking for the ephemeral. The ephemeral is a polymorphous divinity, as is its name. My friend Robert Desnos, that remarkable sage, who keeps strange ships moored in each fold of his brain, has poured long over these syllables which ring out like a legend peopled with green eyes and goblins. He has descended philology's silk ladder in his search for the meaning concealed by this word at the heart of its fertile images:



ÉPHÉMÈRE

F. M. R.

(folie – mort – réverie)

Les faits m'errent

LES FAIX, MÈRES

Fernande aime Robert
pour la vie !

O ÉPHÉMÈRe o

ÉPHÉMÈRES

Ephemeral, F.M.R.L. (frenzy-madness-reverie-love), a fame really, ever merrily, Effie marry Lee: there are words that are mirrors, optical lakes towards which hands stretch out in vain. Prophetic syllables: my dear Desnos, beware of women whose name is Fraenzette or Françoise, beware of those smoldering glances that could fatally ignite your passions, those women loved ephemerally, those Florences, those Ferminas, so easily inflamed to *affirm airily* an imaginary pregnancy. Desnos, steer clear of Fanchettes.

Translated by Simon Watson Taylor

Charles Callet

Hissing and Bellowing

The Formation of Language

We are about to penetrate into the dim distant past, to approach the Hominian at the epic and mysterious moment when his intelligence was blossoming forth and language was born.

A Bimane is watching the antics of another Bimane prowling around not far off. Scenting danger, he utters a low bellow 'Meuh', or a grunt 'Rr, Grr, Krr', or else, with teeth clenched and grinding, and lips spread in a savage and spiteful grin, he makes repressed hissing noises, or nasal grunts *'nee, nyee'.*

These different sounds, which are manifestations of suspicion and anger, are produced instinctively, but they draw the attention of his fellows to his teeth all ready to bite; they could not have aroused in the practical minds of the companions of this creature on guard, and in the minds of those he was protecting—females, the young and the old—any ideas other than those of teeth, bites and fighting; they thus of necessity become the names for tooth, bite, and fighting. This quality of *necessity,* which I cannot stress too highly, will be observed in all primordial sounds.

If we turn to languages both living and dead, we find that the bellowing noise *'meuh'* universally denotes: muzzle, jaw, tooth, biting, eating and killing; the hissing (and growling) *Ss* (or *Ff*), denotes tooth, maw, biting, eating and killing; the guttural grunts *Rr, Kr, Grr,* and the nasal grunt, *Nee* or *Nyee* denote tooth, maw, biting, eating and killing.

These constant meanings are the inevitable consequence of a single creative law.

General Remark: *Roots, or elementary germs, are never images, never depict objects, are unconnected with onomatopoeia or sound imitation, and are not the product of any convention.*

Hissing Language

Whim, choice, convention and onomatopoeia played no part in the production and evolution of the sound *Nee. Nyee* or *Nee,* a sort of grunt produced by the vocal organs during a Rictus, did not announce an immediate battle, but warned the adversary that the emitter was on his guard, and that teeth and nails were ready for action.

The Hissing noise was more threatening, and as the teeth were bared ferociously, it was inevitable that *Ss, Sh,* and *Ff,* natural cries and utterances of the species, should become the universal name (or more accurately, one of the names) for tooth.

Ss or *Ff,* as tooth and point, had endless progeniture.

Let us make a brief study of this progeniture through the millennia, and penetrate the underlying causes of word derivation.

S = tooth, it names a bite, a mouth, the whole face and lastly the expression on it; the term *S* comes to designate hunger and thirst.

S qualifies animals with fearsome teeth, sharp beaks, pointed horns and poisoned stings; it qualifies their ferocity and the terror they inspire.

Anything pointed, or with an elongated shape, will be named with an 'S': reeds, shoots, grass, hair, eyelashes, fur, horsehair, pachyderms' bristles; trees, stones, flint, rocks, and mountains, which so often look like teeth.

Meanings broaden and branch out, they take in all the knowledge and discoveries of the intellect: words derived from S, meaning 'plant', come to be given to newly sown crops, cultivation, garnering, the harvest; to the richness, the experience and the knowledge of the cultivator.

Bellowing Language

The primary meaning of words in N, G, R and S was, as has been established, 'tooth', 'biting', 'killing', 'eating', 'saliva', 'water', etc. *Meuh* gives rise to a series of phonemes with identical meanings: the same law, the same logic determines the same forms of evolution.

Meuh, as I have noted, has a plaintive sound to begin with; the human who wandered over a hostile land shaken by tremors, inhabited by awesome beasts, was conscious of his own weakness and dimly foresaw the dreadful future awaiting him. Wakening to intelligence, and therefore to awareness of his wretched plight, he uttered desperate bellowing noises, and languages have preserved some echo of his lamentations. In Latin, *mu* is a cry of pain; in Walloon, *mus* = 'taciturn', 'sad'; in Celto-Breton, *mar* = 'anxiety', *maritel* = 'suffering', *melgré* = 'heartache'; Old French had *mari* = 'suffering', *marmiteux* = groan. In Hebrew, *mar* = 'affliction'.

Let us look at some derivations; I shall concentrate to some extent on the languages of countries round about us.

Some of the expressions I have just noted down, and those expressions rendering pallor, yellowing (jaundice), illness (malady): *marrana* and *marfi* (Langue d'Oc), *morlivet* (Breton), come from roots denoting water and swamps. (In Walloon, *marass* = 'marsh', *masi* = 'dirty', 'muddy'. In Norman patois, *marsouin* = 'dirty person'. As the name for a Cetacean, *marsouin* means 'pig' or 'water boar': *meri-suin* in Old High German, and *mar-svin* in Norse. In Breton, *moeltr* = 'damp', *morc'h* and *mastar* = 'soiling', *mon* and *mours* = 'excrement', *mouez* = 'stench', etc.

The pernicious influence of stagnant water gives rise to *malaria,* 'fever' and 'death'. M characterises words for death in a large number of languages. Breton has *marv, marô, marf,* this latter sound-sequence also being found in the Langue d'Oc; Welsh has *murv.* Hebrew *mout* and Annamite *mot* = 'drowned' and 'to die'. In Sanskrit, *mara* = 'death'; Latin has *mors.* In Assyrian, *mitu, marsi* = 'malady'. In Puynipet, *melar* = 'death'. In Aduma (Afr.), *maku* = 'death'. In Poul (Afr.), *maï, maêdé* = 'death', *moussi* = 'ill'. In Nahuatlan (Mexico), *mica* = 'death', *miqui* = 'to die'. In Algic (Canada), *may, mal* = 'bad' (Latin *matus*). In Australian, *molwa* = 'corpse'. In Turkish, *memat* = 'death'; *maraz* = 'malady' (French *marasme*); *ma* = 'water', *mourdar* = 'corrupt'. M renders 'muzzle' and 'maw'. In the Langue d'Oc, *mina* = 'mien', 'face'; *moufe* = 'muzzle', 'snout'; *mourre, morga, mus* = 'nose' (Fr. *se musser* = 'to hide', 'to slip'); *musse* (hunting term) denotes the narrow passage into a fort or a hedge for rabbits and hares; originally, a hole into which an animal could insert his muzzle or nose. In Breton, *mîn* = 'mien', 'face', *muzel* = 'muzzle' and 'lip' (Annamite *mep* = 'lip'); *mannouz* = 'nasal-sounding', *musa* = 'to sniff'. In French, *muser, musard* = 'to sniff around'. This word is connected with noses and sniffing.

The dominant position of the head in man (*marré* = 'head'), and also the projection of the nose, have served to designate elevations in the ground. In France, and particularly in the Carnute region, *mares* invariably denotes elevations or peaks. (See L. de Maule, *P.L.* New Archaeological Documents, p. 209, Paris 1874, Dumoulin.) *Marran* = 'mound', 'bank'. In Spanish, *mare* = 'peak', 'summit'; *morne* is the name given to hills in the Antillas. In Assyrian, *mah* = 'elevated'. In

Breton, *meûr* = 'high', 'elevated'. In Kechuan, *mallua* and *maru* = 'hill'. In Maya (Amer.), *mull, much* = 'hill'; Cf. Basque *mendia,* Hebrew *maros.*

Our French word *menace* reproduces the Latin *minacia, minari,* of similar meaning, but the old meaning is well known to have been 'projecting', 'prominent', 'overhanging', like the nose, *mus* or *mourr.*

Translated by Catherine Slater

Claude Gauvreau

Born August 19, 1925, in Montreal, Gauvreau joined the Quebec Automatiste movement in the late 1940s, signing the group manifesto Refus global *in 1948. In a radical break from European Surrealism, Gauvreau developed an "explorational language" that reaches its purest expression in the* Jappements. *Gauvreau preferred to call this nonrepresentational writing "surrational" as opposed to "surreal" automatism. "To allow a strong emotion to build up until, without any preconceived ideas or methods, it shakes the brain's fortifications, drives them mad, and then to write down one after another all the links in a chain that will uncoil like an uninterrupted reptile . . . this is surrational automatism." Few of Gauvreau's works were published during his lifetime, and the 1,500 pages of his posthumous writings stand as testimony to a tenacious productivity.*

1

toucôrô galalumo tepagayac argizdoum tefolec apistam tréglézdéz damîzgwoub arifalffla etougazdircgl éronglon agidau moulmaftlur zigzig opgluzict tilflizdrip égozmo amulcmar ébozdir stleu strouflouflou strafudlucl débauzoi urgde ouch amamouch amouchlav tréhendine ougeuleugeuleugeuluglaglaugludumucuputufalfluéfefaftoflédlègle neûfanhyan

2

garagognialulululululululululululululululululululululullullulululululullulululullulululululullululullullullulululululu lulululululullulululululuuuuuuu

3

li gîz romm tram ta tram ouziblô amugdof dépranifs uzilzior améteudamm ourmiro pafulchtrèv égazia nimonclô zuftrépar abinichéanglegrétri ilvouf trom gazag oup te pluré onglaz vé ouf glouf oupatif chnégd louze trimn assassia glîîîîîîîîzzzzzzz neûrts ouâllâ glédé ptuche tronzdé aukmwâ lougladigidizi seurbelgflemg zdodri ipkito walzsummé égditch ludz crommforni azuzszdel cranfti bleugdz dodozo dodozo dodozo

4

gastribig aboulouc nouf geûleurr naumanamanamanamouèr agulztri stubglèpct olstromstim ulzz stupp lûdzz lagauzniopc légo lagoztropche agouannse légblé atoutss stroumblamblam lighili auz urm lumn stréglo flaf aflafl aflafl aflaf fréné ghudughé agoldogle sirmounx afré stinkchle grédlamouèr luce amoustroufle gudd putt putt abuzdlufle ozcrondche grutche agrégutche glussmlâ mouorte meûlze mouof woulplof pufft tpufft aglinnslanne solss apébècht clarolinaclannnaclunnaclubec

5

lazmoitoidloghelanghan ourptf izniglitipiliafauchéghoglolgrégalduzuzhé-hométafoilapérouach wouagligd rumina fanferlin ouptin iglou stou plumniumn uculuculiculenculaglumenclumnostrovlidéjéjaujouir

6

nrôm atila atiglagla glô émect tufachiraglau égondzapanoir tufirupiplèthagouloumeurector ezdannz ezdoucrémouacptteu pif-legoulem ôz nionfan nimarulta apiviavovioc tutul latranerre dèg wobz choutss striglanima uculpt treflagamon

7

beûlokdokbloughezoum achia chichenéchiné chachouann gduppt étréofla-glontz amu mimaulomaromurméftéjauglionair-aretel lingz ling-z liop apoutréflobgipct gougouz gou ératra telfombrati iéthol argeltz nautel povouran

8

ghédérassann omniomnemm wâkulé orod ècmon zdhal irchpt laugouzou-gldefterrpanuclémenpénucleptadussel ferf folfoufaulô farmurerr a clô dzorr

Oulipo

Like the Desnos poem "Rrose Sélavy, etc." above, this unsigned text by Oulipo (which stands for Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle) rehearses the letters of the alphabet (excluding H, K, W, X, and Y) in homophonic transcription. Each line wraps one consonant around the vowel sequence A-E-I-O-U, and the results precipitate a fragmentary sense amidst the overwhelming consistency of sound values in rotation.

Clef du Petit Abécédaire Illustré

1	*Bah! Beh! Bi beau: but*	Bah! Beh! Bi beautiful: goal
2	*Caquet: qui cocu?*	Cackle: who cuckold?
3	*Dad est dit dodu*	Dad is said plump
4	*Faf' et fifre au fût!*	Faf' and fife by the barrel!
5	*Gag: Eh, Guy, gogues hue!*	Gag: Eh, guy, {loo/can/john} giddyap!
6	*Ja j'ai gît, jauge eu*	Ja I have lies down, gauge had
7	*Là l'est, l'îlot lu*	There it is, the small land read [past tense verb]
	Lalo lit l'Élu	
8	*Mâme et mime, oh mue!*	Mâme and mime, oh {slough/shed/moult/change}
	Ma maie, mi-mot, mue	My maie, mid-word, {slough/shed/moult/change}
9	*Nanne: N-ine aux nues*	Nanne; N-ine in the clouds
10	*Pape épie, Pô pue*	Pope spies, Po stinks
	Pas pépie, pope, hue	
11	*Rare est rire aux rues*	Rare is to laugh at streets
12	*ça! Cesse, hisse au su!*	That! Cease, hoist up to the knowledge of
	Sas est-ce, hi, Saussure?	{Airlock/lock/sieve} is it, hi, Saussure?
13	*Taté, Tito tut*	
14	*Va! Veux! Vive au vu!*	Go on! Want! Live openly
15	*Qu'Saxe, ex-X,! Oh que su . . . !*	Wha'Saxony, ex-X [sex]! Oh how known . . . !
16	*Za, z'éziz . . . Oh zut!*	Za, s'éziz . . . Oh drat!

Translated by Stephanie Nutting

Divinities and Aliens

Commenting on Genesis 1:27, Walter Benjamin writes, "God did not create man from the word, and he did not name him. He did not wish to subject him to language, but in man God set language, which had served Him as medium of creation, free." Supplementing such arguments for divinely certified language, our examples in this section include systems of human reception through various psychosomatic states, raising in these problematic moments the question as to who or what speaks. Sometimes the alien reappears in a familiar lapsarian trope, as in Jacob Boehme's Mysterium Magnum *(see "Cosmology," p. 343 below), which testifies to a natural speech that is providentially sensuous. The angelic tongue lost to man in the* confusio linguarum *persists in glossolalia and "received" speech. Authenticity remains an issue: Swedenborg's angelology, Dee's Enochian Calls, and Hélène Smith's Martian transcriptions all claim a xenoglossic authenticity absent from the playful Barmoodan and Utopian poems of Taylor, and from Psalmanazar's Formosan hoax. Yet both the fashion for, and the obsession with, an extrahuman grammatology undeniably persist in the myths, narratives, and speculations regarding the origin of language.*

John Dee (1527–1608), the Elizabethan magus, first attempted to establish angelic intercourse in 1581 when he employed Edward Kelley as skryer, or seer, to obtain communications with the spirit realm. These initial skrying sessions were more conjurations than seances, involving a ritual deployment of ancillary equipment (skrying table, gold lamen, wax tablets, and obsidian shewstones). Communications received via these initial conjurations are outlined in Dee's Liber Mysteriorum, *which contains dictated commands from the angels Uriel and Annael. The first dictations in "angelical language" were transmitted on March 29, 1583. The visitant archangel Raphael dictated letters by names, which Dee transcribed in "letter-words" (as one might spell out "logos" by writing lambda omicron gamma omicron sigma). Dee would subsequently read back the transcription to his angelic visitants from his English text. It is not until the later appearance of the genuine Enochian language that a comprehensible celestial communication emerges. In a note dated April 21, 1584, Dee describes Enochian as the language "which Adam spake in his innocency, and was never uttered nor disclosed to man since till now." The dictated texts in Enochian are referred to as "Calls" by Dee and purportedly comprise supernatural invocations presented as numerous squares filled with letters (some calls being as large as 49 × 49 squares). Unlike the earlier angelical receptions, the Enochian Calls are accompanied by transliterations into the Roman alphabet, with translations. The Enochian alphabet itself consists of twenty-one characters, a fact that leads Laycock to speculate on Dee's interest in orthographic reform. He also contends that Enochian has a decidedly English base in its grammar, syntax, and vocabulary. We provide examples of both the Enochian characters and Dee's romanized transcriptions, along with* *an interlinear translation to facilitate comprehension. As a liminal writing system, Enochian haunts the borders of several possibilities: a genuine dictated language, a clever hoax, an authentic trance emission, and even a strategic cryptography.*[1]

The six years of Kelley's skrying and Dee's faithful documentation of the results bear a resemblance to religious devotion. The summoning of voices through oracles for the purpose of prophecy has lasting religious associations, of course. The word enthusiasm *derives from the Greek, "to be filled with the god." Linguistic utterance in trance states and possession is a global phenomenon, if culturally variable.*[2] *St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians famously dignifies glossolalia in the early Church: "For he that speaketh in a tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God; for no man understandeth; but in the spirit he speaketh mysteries" (I Cor. 14:2). Speaking in tongues has long been the province of Pentecostalism; just as, in the modern world, angelic communication is consigned to the dubious realm of seances, telepathy, cryptomnesia, and other kinds of extrasensory perception. In its most managerial posture, modern science in the form of psychiatry attributes hallucinatory audition and involuntary speech to psychosis. Nevertheless, speaking in tongues continues to be a widespread manifestation of religious enthusiasm.*

We can gather under the general rubric of glossolalia (speaking in tongues) Elise-Catherine Müller's somnambulistic vocalizations, utterances, and writings as they emerged from a state of altered consciousness. Müller, a Swiss salesperson, developed spiritualist connections in 1892 and immediately demonstrated strong mediumistic powers. In her trance seances she recalled a series of personal reincarnations: after being the daughter of an Arab sheik she returned in a new life as Simandini the wife of a Hindu prince, then as Marie Antoinette and later as Hélène Smith. In her mediumistic states she developed affiliations with the planet Mars. Smith's trance-produced language was arrived at via four different automatisms: a verbo-auditive, comprising somnambulistic hearings and subsequent recordings; a purely vocal automatism which Smith herself spoke rapidly in her trance; a verbo-visual, consisting of the spontaneous apparition of characters and letters before her eyes in a nontrance state; and graphic automatisms consisting of writings traced manually by Smith while in a trance condition and inhabiting a Martian personality.

As in the case of Dee's Enochian, Smith's Martian allows two possible conclusions. They are either genuine transmissions across an existential threshold, or else theoretically explicable psychogenetic products. After detailed analyses (in consultation with Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure), Théodore Flournoy[3] *dismisses Smith's Martian language as "an infantile travesty of French," and elsewhere—less harshly—describes it as "French metamorphosed and carried to a higher diapason." Flournoy admits, however, that Smith's Martian albeit a subliminal invention, is nonetheless a coherent language and writing system. A remark by Lévi-Strauss on totemism and hysteria suggests yet another taxonomic destiny for Smith's Martian and Dee's Enochian: "The vogue of hysteria demonstrated . . . a tendency, common to many branches of learning toward the end of the nineteenth century, to mark off certain human phenomena as though they constituted a natural entity—which scholars preferred to* *regard as alien to their own moral universe, thus protecting the attachment which they felt toward the latter." It is Michel Pierssens, however, who offers the most satisfying rehabilitation of Dee and Smith within the sociolect. Following Deleuze, he speaks of languages as constituting "a single continuous idiom" in which "the discourse of truth about man passes through glossolalia . . . the chain is continuous: everything which speaks 'speaks in tongues'."*

The longstanding model of the great chain of being that prevailed from antiquity through the Renaissance depicted earthly life as a repository of influences—astral, angelic, demonic—and human nature as consisting of a rational and a vegetal soul, along with the corporeal form and its humors. Human speech was necessarily implicated in a vaster suprasensible realm. The difference in context between Dee and Smith is the lapse of this tradition. Consequently, a contemporary of Smith's who actively solicits spiritual interlocutors, like W. B. Yeats, is seen as either embellishing his account of poetic inspiration or deliberately adhering to irrationalism. In either case, the enthusiastic belief of a Dee is not seen as an option in the modern world. The figure of Yeats returns us to the question: who speaks? In Jacques Derrida's reading of the Book of Revelation, "as soon as one no longer knows who speaks or who writes, the text becomes 'apocalyptic'." In the Western archetype of the Muses, poetry is singled out as the phantom double of language, arising in the rift between mind and tongue, thought and word. In the classic account of the Helikonian Muses, Hesiod submits to a controlling inspiration in which the distinction between truth and falsity is undeterminable. Octavio Paz refers to this as a submission to "the voice of language" as such, "the voice of no one and of all. Whatever name we give this voice—inspiration, the unconscious, chance, accident, revelation—it is always the voice of otherness.*'" In Henri Meschonnic's succinct declaration: "Le schéma du signe est le schéma même du sacré: une relation à l'Absent, à l'Autre" (The model of the sign is also the model of the sacred: a relation to the Absent, to the Other). The transcendental affiliations of language are not spurious, but they remain enigmatic. The Irish mystic and poet A.E. (George Russell) declares his allegiance to the xenoglossic accordingly: "I have no doubt that in a remoter antiquity the roots of language were regarded as sacred, and when chanted every letter was supposed to stir into motion or evoke some subtle force in the body," and with discipline "there comes at last a moment when at the calling of the Ineffable Name the Holy Breath rises as a flame and the shadow man goes forth to become one with the ancestral self." The "inner script" of Justinus Kerner's seeress of Prevorst offers an evocative image of such a pilgrimage (for Kerner's account of the seeress, see "transition," p. 40 above).*

Stuart Schneiderman, a Lacanian analyst, has written discerningly on "invisible spirits who fly through the air bearing messages": "It happens that the people who spent most of the time cogitating the angels were the same who developed the theory of the linguistic sign." Divinity and the alien come together in the modern emblem of psychosis, which is also the place where metaphysics meets the skin. Schneiderman's book is best understood as a protracted examination of Lacan's definition of psychosis as the belief not only in the message (the voices) but the messenger (words as such). "While we may abstract the world of words and study it in itself, the angels are not just words; they are speakers and users *of language. They are not just messages, but they are also messengers." This helps explain the powerfully dramatic impact of angelical and transmigrated beings in Dee's skryings and Smith's seances respectively. Evident too in these alien communications is the uncanniness with which* language knows where we are. *It is not I who speak, cautions Heraclitus, it is the logos. "In relation to language, we are both makers and made."*

In language we are never lost, though we may lose our bearings. We are born into it, as if we were the viral agents forming a parasitical attachment to the host of the mother tongue. In Christopher Dewdney's poetic speculation, language is a "cumulative project" of the species, comparable to animal husbandry:

> However, language has had a much more profound effect on its creators than has the hybridization of domestic animals. Once conceived, language becomes self-replicating, a lexical organism imbedded in the species. The evolution of language, inextricably bound with the evolution of our consciousness as a species, has diverged from its parallel status and taken on a life of its own. Language is virtually an independent intelligence utilizing humans as neural components in a vast and inconceivable sentience.

Neurological research into the language centers of the brain lends credence to the notion that "language can be regarded as a psychic parasite which has genetically earmarked a section of the cortex for its own accomodation." Setting aside for the moment this sinister scenario of invading body-snatchers, the holographic mobility of language in the brain renders Shoshana Felman's hypothesis particularly apt: "Wouldn't the attempt to 'break out of metaphysics' necessarily entail a break, first of all, with the physics of a mother tongue?" Reverting to the parasitic model of symbiosis between language virus and human host, and following Sylvère Lotringer's assertion that "the subject of the enunciation does not have to be unconscious—language is unconscious for him," we might posit that it is we who are unconscious for language. Language is structural intentionality. We don't have to mean when we speak: language makes meanings for us. This is the glossolalian given. It is we who interject, extrude, and precipitate its disarray. We are language somatized. The token of the proper name spells out the seam or juncture of this propositional equation of language and the body. Understood this way, language shows itself as the uncontrollable ventriloquy of its own singularities. In Martin Heidegger's cautionary proposition, "Man acts as though he were the shaper and master of language, while in fact language remains the master of man."

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1 It is a short step from cryptography to angelology. In Trithemius's *Steganographia* (1506), as in Dee's Enochian accounts, angels are deployed as alphabetic messengers. Shumaker provides persuasive evidence that even Trithemius's explicit angelic invocations are encrypted instructions for decoding portions of text.

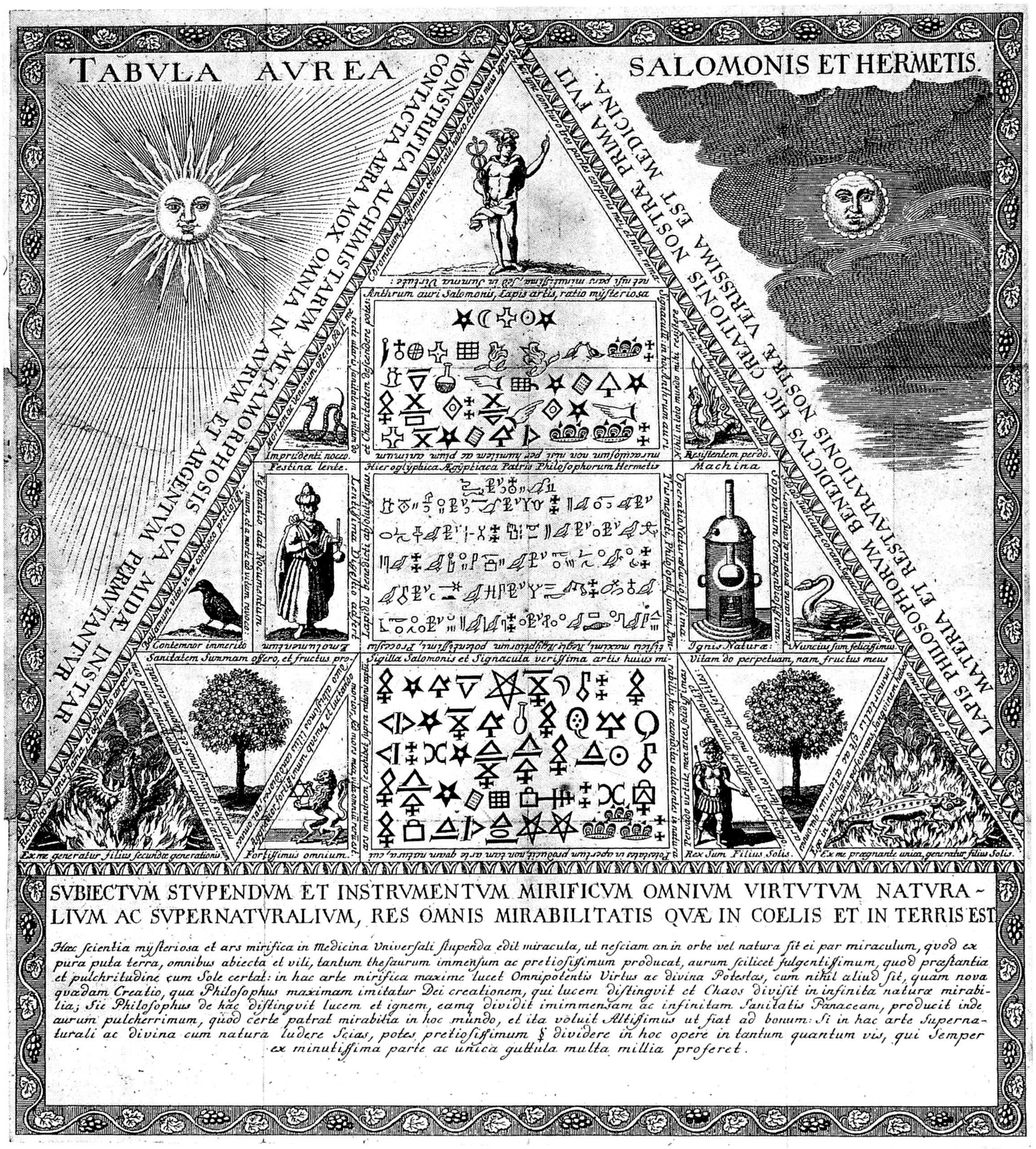
"Pamersiel Anoyr Madrisel Ebrasothean Abrulges Itrasbiel Nadres Ormenu Itules Rablon Hamorphiel" is an invocation that, if the first and last words are discounted and we read every other letter in the remaining words, reveals the cryptogrammic instruction "Nym die ersten Bugstaben de omni uerbo" or "Take the first letters of every word." Shumaker overconfidently concludes that "the spirits are useless because they serve no purpose beyond providing names for the systems"—but as practitioners of various magical as well as bureaucratic systems know, to name something is to gain compelling power over it.

2 Despite variations in cultural context, the material manifestations of glossolalia are fairly uniform, as Felicitas Goodman discovered in ethnographic fieldwork in four languages and seven different cultural settings. Among her findings: utterances tend to begin with a consonant (but no consonantal clusters) but do not end with a consonant; they commonly conform to a trochaic rhythm, with primary stress falling on the initial pulse of a phrase, and intonation patterns show "an onset in the medium range, a peak, and a sloping gradient leading to an often precipitous decay." Also, in each cultural context, glossolalia becomes stereotyped, mirroring the practice of "guides" or prompters.

3 It was Flournoy who brought Smith's case to the public in his best-selling book *Des Indes à la planète Mars: Etude sur un cas de somnambulisme avec glossolalie* (1899, abridged English translation 1900). A Swiss psychologist, Flournoy was a friend of William James (publishing a monograph on his work) and exerted a powerful influence on C. G. Jung. Henri Ellenberger, the historian of psychoanalysis, laments Flournoy's subsequent obscurity. "What psychoanalysts call fantasies represent a minute part of mythopoetic manifestations"—and "Flournoy was a great explorer of the mythopoetic unconscious."

Anonymous

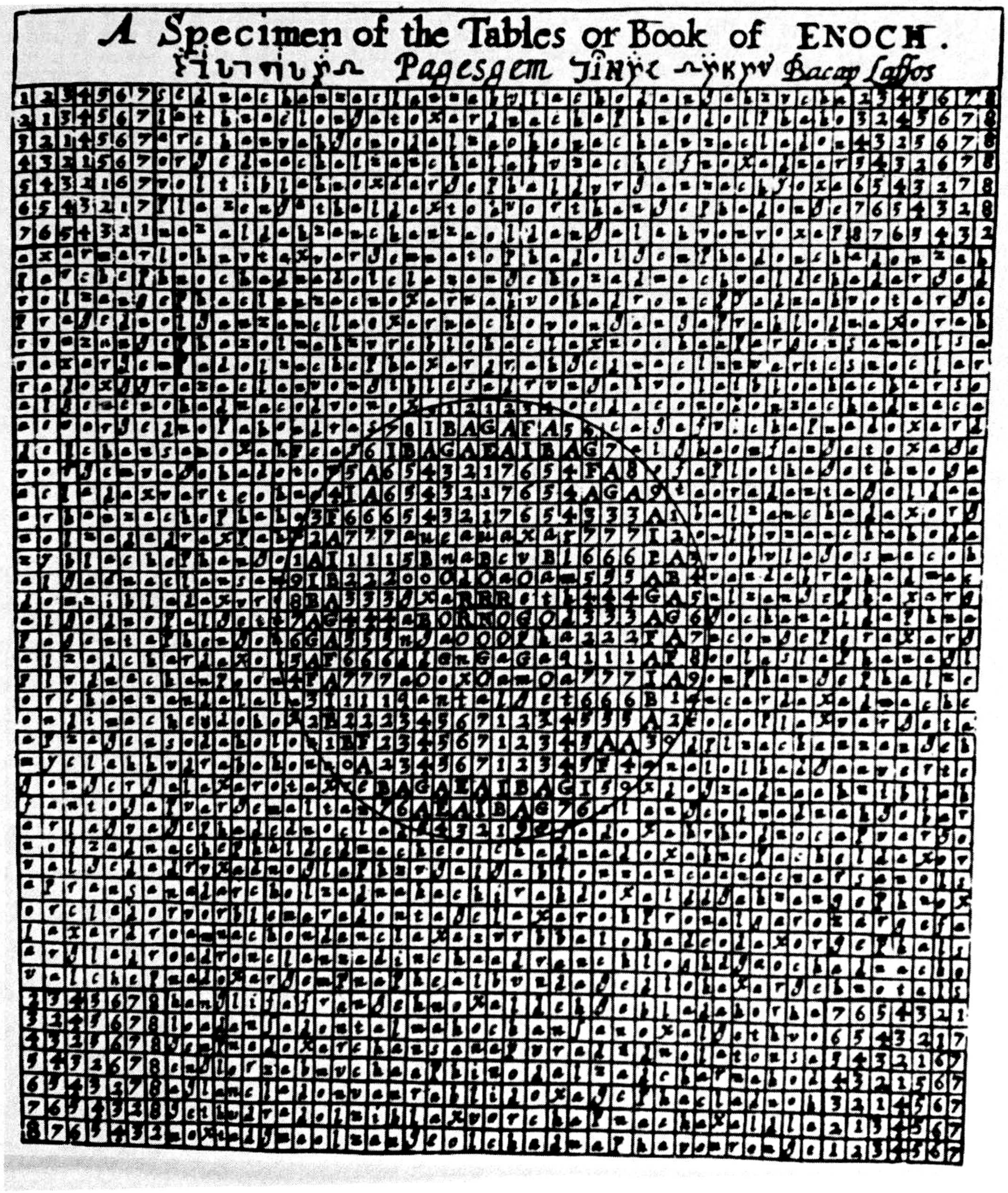
Tabula Aurea Salomonis et Hermetis


TABVLA AVREA
SALOMONIS ET HERMETIS.
MONSTRIFICA ALCHIMISTARVM METAMORPHOSIS QVA MIDÆ INSTAR
CONTACTA AERA MOX OMNIA IN AVRVM ET ARGENTVM PERMVTANTVR
LAPIS PHILOSOPHORVM BENEDICTVS HIC CREATIONIS NOSTRÆ PRIMA FVIT
MATERIA ET RESTAVRATIONIS NOSTRÆ VERISSIMA EST MEDICINA
Anthrum auri Salomonis, Lapis artis, ratio mysteriosa
Imprudenti nocco.
Resistentem perdo.
Festina lente.
Hieroglyphica Ægyptiaca Patris Philosophorum Hermetis
Machina
Contemnor immerito
Ignis Naturæ:
Nuncius sum felicissimus
Sanitatem Summam offero, et fructus pro-
Sigilla Salomonis et Signacula verissima artis huius mi-
Vitam do perpetuam, nam fructus meus
Ex me generatur filius secundæ generationis.
Fortissimus omnium.
Rex Sum Filius Solis.
Ex me prægnante unica, generatur filius Solis.

SVBIECTVM STVPENDVM ET INSTRVMENTVM MIRIFICVM OMNIVM VIRTVTVM NATVRALIVM AC SVPERNATVRALIVM, RES OMNIS MIRABILITATIS QVÆ IN COELIS ET IN TERRIS EST

Hæc ſcientia myſteriosa et ars mirifica in Medicina Univerſali ſtupenda edit miracula, ut neſciam an in orbe vel natura ſit ei par miraculum, quod ex pura puta terra, omnibus abiecta et vili, tantum theſaurum immenſum ac pretioſiſſimum producat, aurum ſcilicet fulgentiſſimum, quod præſtantia et pulchritudine cum Sole certat: in hac arte mirifica maxime lucet Omnipotentis Virtus ac divina Poteſtas, cum nihil aliud ſit, quam nova quædam Creatio, qua Philoſophus maximam imitatur Dei creationem, qui lucem diſtinguit et Chaos diviſit in infinita naturæ mirabilia; Sic Philoſophus de hac diſtinguit lucem et ignem, eamq dividit imimmenſam ac infinitam Sanitatis Panaceam, producit inde aurum pulcherrimum, quod certe patrat mirabilia in hoc mundo, et ita voluit Altiſſimus ut fiat ad bonum: Si in hac arte Supernaturali ac divina cum natura ludere Scias, potes pretioſiſſimum § dividere in hoc opere in tantum quantum vis, qui Semper ex minutiſſima parte ac unica guttula multa millia proferet.

Enochian Table



A Specimen of the Tables or Book of ENOCH.

Pagesgem Bacap Laffos

Enochian Call

I have set my feet in the south, and have looked about me, saying: are not the thunders
Othil lasdi babage, od dorpha, gohol: g chis ge avavago
of increase numbered 33, which reign in the second angle? Under whom I have placed
cormp pd, ds sonf viu diu? Casarmi oali
9639, whom none has yet numbered but one, in whom the second beginning of things are and
mapm, sobam ag cormpo crp l, casarmg croodzi chis od
wax strong; which also successively, are the number of time; and their powers are as the first
ugeg; ds t, capimali, chis capimaon; od lonshin chis ta lo
456. Arise, you sons of pleasure, and visit the earth, for I am the Lord your God, which is and
cla. Torgu, nor quasahi, od f caosga; bagle zir enay lad, ds i od
lives. In the name of the Creator, move, and show yourselves as pleasant deliverers, that you
apila. Dooaip Quaal, zacar, od zamran obelisong,
may praise him amongst the sons of men.
rest el aaf nor molap.

Emanuel Swedenborg

Noted as a theologian, heretic, and visionary, Swedenborg (1688–1772) also made important contributions in science. He laid down the foundations for the modern sciences of crystallography and metallurgy, and prognosticated both the molecular basis of magnetism and the nebular formation of planetary systems. His many inventions include the airtight stove, glider aircraft, and the mercurial air pump. After a life-transforming vision in 1745 he gave up scientific studies and devoted the rest of his life to theologico-visionary writings largely based on a combination of biblical interpretation and personal, transcendental experiences. He claims to have been a spiritual witness to the Last Judgment in 1757, and to have made frequent journeys to Heaven and Hell, conversing with inhabitants of both spheres. His thinking had a profound impact on the young William Blake after Blake attended a meeting of the Swedish visionary's New Church; and Swedenborg occupies a significant place as the Angel of the Resurrection in Blake's Marriage of Heaven and Hell.

The Angelic Language

[237] Angelic language has nothing in common with human language, except for certain words resounding from particular affections. . . . The lack of common ground between angelic language and human languages is evident, in that angels find it impossible to utter a single word in human language. They have tried, and have been unable. Anything repugnant to their life angels find unpronounceable; for life is from affection, and their speech flows from their life. . . .

[241] The speech of celestial angels is like a gentle stream, soft and continuous, while the speech of spiritual angels is a bit vibratory and discrete. The speech of celestial angels inclines to the sounds *u* and *o*, while the speech of spiritual angels uses the sounds *e* and *i*. The vowels serve for tone, and in the tone is the affection. For as mentioned above, the tone of angels' speech corresponds to affection, and the distinct sound units—the words—correspond to thought concepts arising from affections. Since vowels do not belong directly to language, but rather to the pitch of sound units elevated tonally in various affections according to one's condition, the vowels are not represented in Hebrew and are variously pronounced. Angels recognize from intonation a person's quality of affection and love. The speech of celestial angels, lacking hard consonants, rarely goes from one consonant to another without slipping in a vowel. . . . Because affections are tonally expressive, even in human speech great subjects like *coelum* and *Deus* preferentially incline to *u* and *o*. Musical sounds, too, swell into the same vowels for subjects of comparable magnitude. . . .

[244] In heaven the wisest speech is interior and most variable; the less wise is exterior and slightly diminished; and the speech of the simple is altogether

external and consists of words, words requiring interpretation just like the words of humans. There is also a language of the face, shading over sonorously into concepts; and a language combining heavenly delegates with ideas; another language, of gestures corresponding to affections; and a language of thunder, besides many others. . . .

[255] When angels and spirits turn their attentions to people they know nothing but what is given in human language. This is because they so thoroughly enter into human speech that they forget their own; but as soon as their attention strays from humans they're fully reabsorbed into the angelic language, where they no longer understand a word of human tongues. The same thing happened to me when in my companionship with angels, when I conversed with them in their speech and knew nothing of my own; but when I passed from their fellowship I was back in the human language again. . . .

[260] Once a little page was posted to me from heaven, with just a few Hebrew letters. Each letter, it was said, encompassed an arcanum of wisdom, secrets enfolded in bends and curves and inflections of the letters—and so too in the sounds. I then could make out the meaning of these words of the Lord: *Verily I say unto you, until heaven and earth pass away, one iota or one tittle shall not pass away from the law* (Matthew 5:18). In the Church it is known that the Word is divine right up to its apex; but it is not generally known how this Word lies hidden in the tips of every letter, and this shall be told. The writing of the inmost heaven consists of various inflected and circumflected forms, the curves and roundings in accordance with heavenly form, by which the angels express the arcana of their wisdom and many things unbounded by words; and, most marvelous, the angels know this without any teacher or training, it being implanted directly within them like language itself. This is the heavenly writing. Its endowment means that all the angels' thoughts and affections, and all their shared wisdom and sapience, flow in accord with the heavenly script, into which their own writing flows. I have been told that the earliest humans, long before the invention of letters, possessed such a script, and that it migrated into the letters of Hebrew, which were then all curved and sinuous, not straight and distinct as they are today. So it is that the Divine inheres in the Word, the arcana of heaven cleaving to the very iotas and jots and tittles and tips. . . .

[262] It is worth noting that in heaven writing flows immediately from thoughts, as effortlessly as if the thoughts simply projected themselves. The hand never hesitates in search of a word, which spontaneously appears. There are also writings in heaven not given by hand but by thought; however, these tend to fade away.

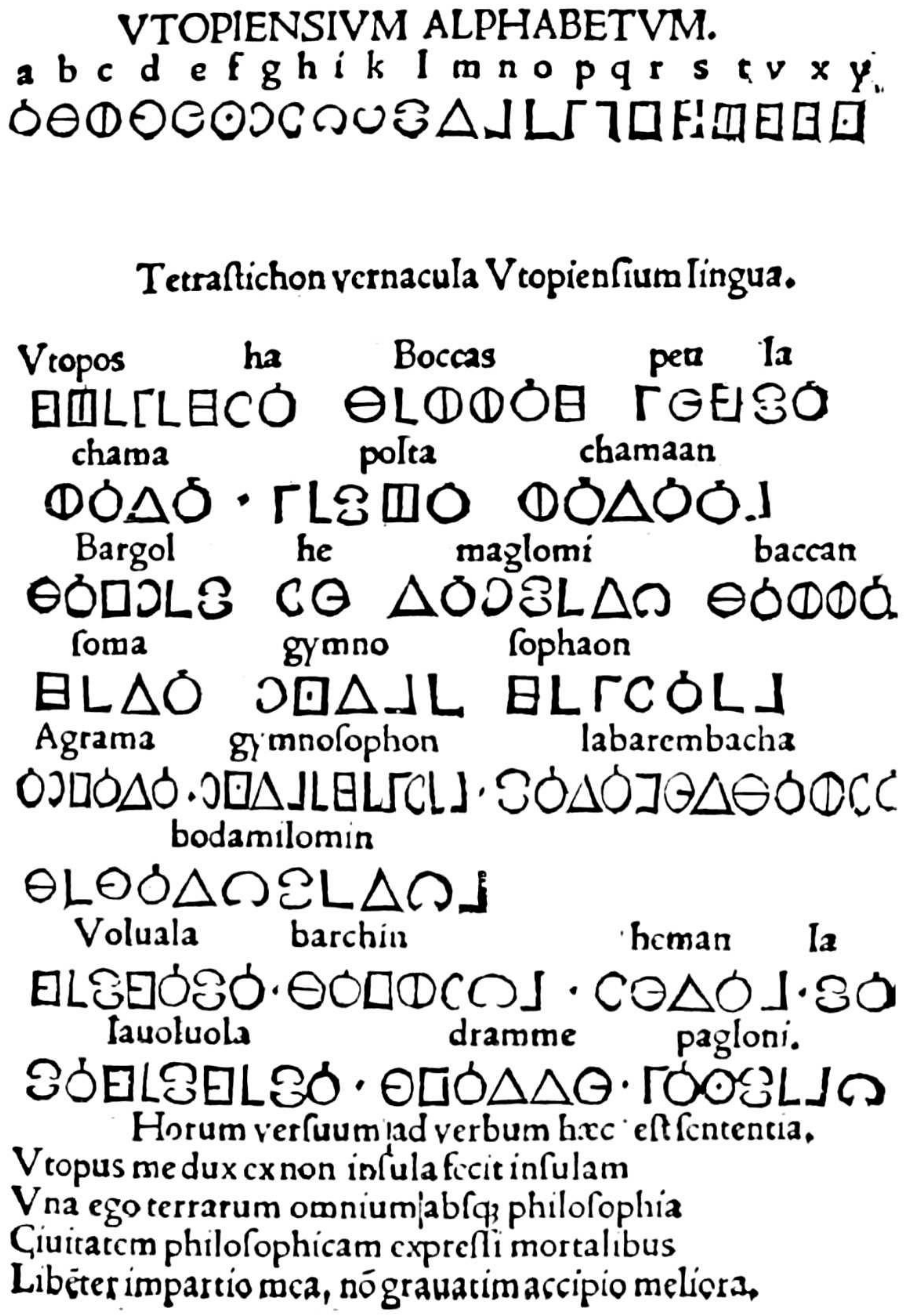
[263] I have also seen a heavenly writing consisting exclusively of numbers, ordered sequentially like letters and words. I have been instructed that such writings emanate from the inmost heaven; that heavenly writing descends numerically; and that this numerical script involves arcana untranslatable to words. Numbers are correspondences just like words, but numbers involve generality, while words adhere to particularity. And since a single generality involves countless particulars, numerical writing enfolds a vaster arcanum than alphabetic writing. Such distinctions enabled me to see that numbers in the Word signify as plentifully as do words. In the numerical script, a number serves as prefix to a sequence that conforms to the topic and scope indicated by that number.

Adapted by Jed Rasula

Thomas More

More is credited with the invention in Utopia *of the first imaginary language. The characters of his alphabet reappear twelve years later as a patent borrowing in Geofroy Tory's* Champ Fleury. *Rabelais's version of utopia, Medamothy (which like "utopia" means* nowhere*), is presented in* Gargantua; *a utopian language from* Gargantua *can be found below in "Fictive Encounters" (p. 158 below). The quatrain by More reproduced here purports to be in the Utopian vernacular, with a Latin translation which says "My ruler Utopos [Greek for "no place"] made me into an island from a not-island. Unique among lands, and without philosophy, I signify for mortals the philosophical city. I freely share my gifts, and accept without complaint what is better."*

Quatrain in Utopian Vernacular



VTOPIENSIVM ALPHABETVM.
a b c d e f g h i k l m n o p q r s t v x y

Tetraſtichon vernacula Vtopienſium lingua.

Vtopos ha Boccas peu la
chama polta chamaan
Bargol he maglomi baccan
ſoma gymno ſophaon
Agrama gymnoſophon labarembacha
bodamilomin
Voluala barchin heman la
lauoluola dramme pagloni.

Horum verſuum ad verbum hæc eſt ſententia.
Vtopus me dux ex non inſula fecit inſulam
Vna ego terrarum omnium abſq; philoſophia
Ciuitatem philoſophicam expreſſi mortalibus
Libēter impartio mea, nō grauatim accipio meliora.

Utopian and Cabalistic Verses Accompanying Coryat's Crudities

The utopian poems of Fenton and Peacham, together with Hoskins's verses, first appeared in 1611 among several "Panegyrick Verses" that accompanied Thomas Coryat's Crudities, *a gathering of his observations during travels through France, Switzerland, and Italy. The utopian poems' xenoglossic formats have a playful rather than cryptic intent and bear comparison with Shakespeare's invented sentences—the famous "Chough's language"—in* All's Well That Ends Well. *The latter are brief enough to be presented in full:* "Throca movousus, cargo, cargo, cargo," "Cargo, cargo, cargo, villanda par corbo, cargo," "Boskos thromuldo boskos," "Boskos vauvado . . . Kerelybonto," "Manka revania dulche," "Oscorbidulchos volivorco," "Acordo linta" *(IV. i);* "Portotartarossa," "Bosko chimurcho," "Boblibindo chicurmurco" *(IV.iii.).*

Utopian Verse

Ny thalonin ythsi Coryate lachmah babowans
O Asiam Europam Americ-werowans
Poph-himgi Savoya, Hessen, Rhetia, Ragonzie
France, Germanien dove Anda-louzie
Not A-rag-on ô Coryate, ô hone vilascar
Einen tronk Od-combe ny Venice Berga-mascar.

Henry Peacham

"Cabalistic" Verses

"Cabalistical Verses, which by Transposition of Words, Syllables, and Letters, make excellent Sense, otherwise none."

Even as the waves of brainlesse butter'd fish,
With bugle horne writ in the hebrew tongue,
Fuming up flounders like a chafing-dish,
That looks asquint upon a Three-mans song:
Or as your equinoctiall pasticrust
Projecting out a purple chariot wheele,
Doth squeeze the spheares, and intimate the dust,
The dust which force of argument doth feele:
Even so this Author, this Gymnosophist,
Whom no delight of travels toyle dismaies,
Shall sympathize (thinke reader what thou list)
Crownd with a quinsill tipt with marble praise.

John Hoskins

Encomiological Antispasticks, Consisting of Epitrits, the fourth in the first syzugie, which the vulgar call Phaleuciac hendecasyllables; trimeters Catalectics with Antispastic Asclepiads, trimeters Acatalectics consisting of two dactylicall commaes of some learned named Choriambicks, both together dicoli distrophi, rythmicall and hyperrythmicall, amphibologicall, dedicated to the undeclinable memory of the autarkesticall Coryate, the only true travelling Porcupen in England.

---vv--vv-vv

---vv--vv-vv

---vv--v-v-v

---vv-v-v-v

poem and description by John Hoskins

Sheeloosht arfraindren convay alefill
Emnanght elslopen seraght emneghtill;
Ofaghth contraltight erpon emselah,
Prutalt artennah semank semnelah.

In English thus.

Faire starre of learning which on us dost shine,
With beauteous lustre and aspectfull cheare,
Goe lend thy light awhile beyond the line,
And blaze on the Antipodian hemispheare.

poem and translation by William Fenton of Knockfergus

John Taylor

Of humble birth, Taylor (1580–1653) was apprenticed to a London waterman, subsequently pressed into the Navy, and on retirement became a Thames waterman himself. His first book, The Sculler, *appeared in 1612, followed by several others. As well as poems in Barmoodan and Utopian, Taylor wrote numerous nonsense poems in doggerel.*

Utopian and Barmoodan Verses

Epitaph in the Barmooda tongue, which must be pronounced with the accent of the grunting of a hogge

Hough gruntough wough Thomough
Coriatough, Odcough robunqough,
Warawogh bogh Comitogh iogh wogh termonatogrogh,
Callimogh gogh whobogh Ragamogh demagorgogh palemogh,
Lomerogh nogh Tottertogh illemortogh eagh Allaquemquogh,
Teracominogh Jagogh Jamerogh mogh Carnogh pelepsogh,
Animogh trogh deradrogh maramogh hogh Flondrogh calepsogh.

Epitaph in the Utopian tongue

Nortumblum callimūquash omystoliton quashte burashte,
Scribuke woshtay solusbay per ambulatushte;
Grekay sons Turkay Paphay zums Ierusalushte.
Neptus esht Ealors Interremoy diz Dolorushte,
Confabuloy Odcumbay Prozeugmolliton tymorumynoy,
Omulus oratushte paralescus tolliton umbroy.

Translation "by Caleb Quishquash, an Utopian borne and principall Secretary to the great Adelontado of Barmoodoes"

Here lies the wonder of the English Nation,
Involv'd in Neptunes *brinish vasty maw:*
For fruitlesse travell, and for strange relation,
He past and repast all that e'er eye saw.
Odcomb *produc'd him; many Nations fed him,*
And worlds of Writers, through the world have spred him.

Utopian Tongue

Thoytom Asse Coria Tushrump codsheadirustie,
Mungrellimo whish whap ragge dicete tottrie,
Mangelusquem verminets nipsem barelybittimsore
Culliandolt travellerbumque, graiphone trutchmore.
Pusse per mew (Odcomb) gul abelgik foppery shig shag
Cock a peps Comb sottishamp, Idioshte momulus tag rag.

Certaine verses written in the Barbarian tongue, dropt out of a Negroes pocket, which I thought good to insert, because they tend to honour Tobacco

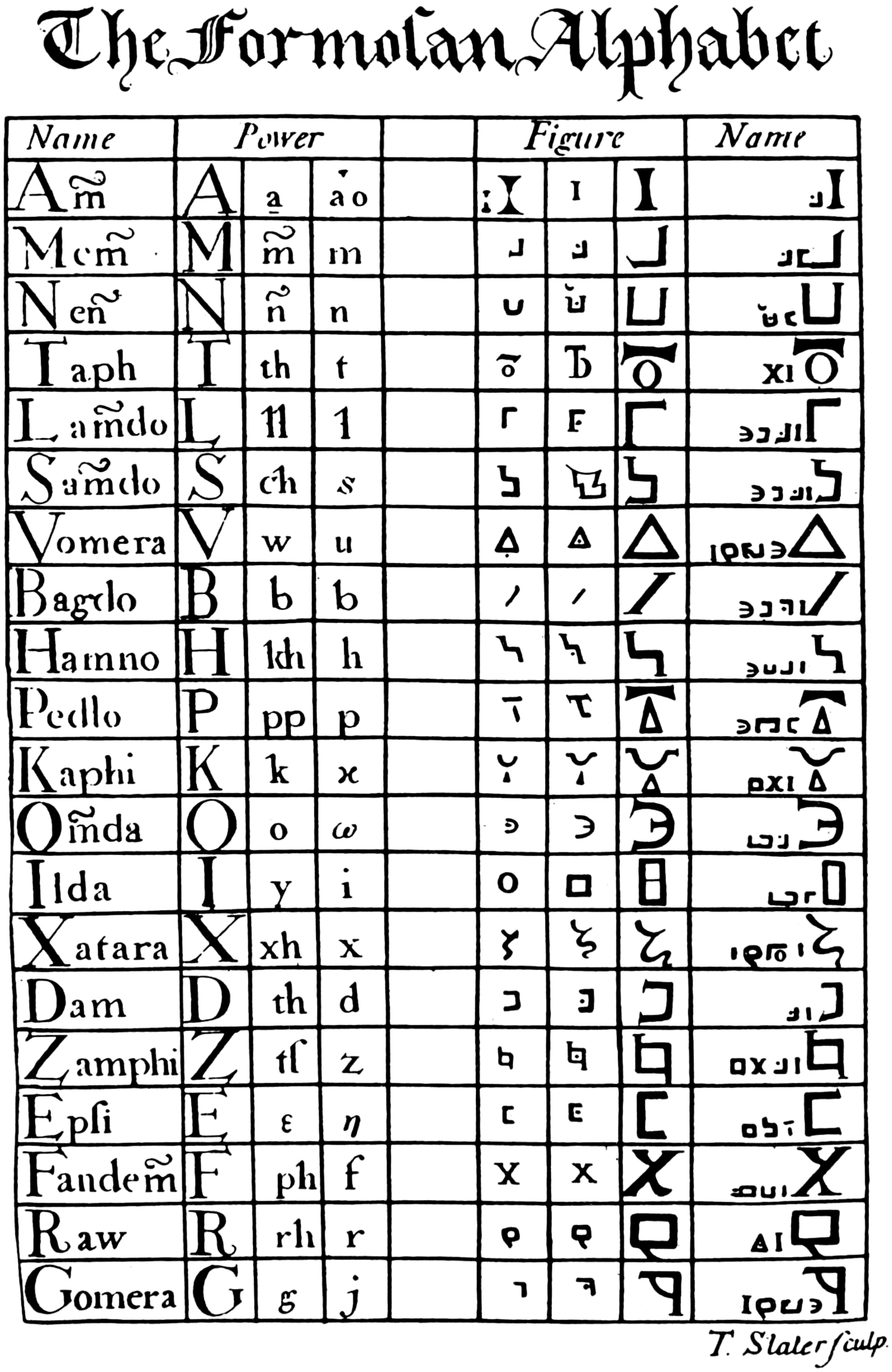
Vaprosh fogh stinkquash flavorumques fie fominoshte.
Spitterspawlimon, loatherfō hem halkish spiwriboshte,
Mistrum fog smoakrash, choakerumques olifa trish trash.
Dam durticuu belchum, contagioshte vomitroshe:
Whifferum, puffe gulpum, allisnuff huff fleaminonodish,
Rewmito contaminosh diabollish dungish odorish:

George Psalmanazar

Psalmanazar (whose true name remains unknown) was a native of southern France. Living an itinerant life as a beggar, he posed as a converted, then lapsed, Christian, claiming to live on raw meat, roots, and herbs. Psalmanazar's invented language (which gained him a position at Oxford to teach Formosan) was one component of a larger hoax that included invented histories and geographies. Although his Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa *attracted immediate attention when it appeared in 1704, it was not until the second edition that Psalmanazar gained notoriety by adding a passage describing the Formosans as cannibals and claiming to have eaten human flesh himself. People flocked to see his simulated demonstrations on stage. Twenty-four years later Swift cites him as an example and authority in his* Modest Proposal.

The Lord's Prayer in Formosan

Amy Pornio dan chin Ornio viey,	Our Father which art in Heaven,
Gnayjorhe sai Lorey,	Hallowed be Thy Name,
Eyfodere Sai Bagalin,	Thy Kingdom come.
Jorhe sai domion apo chin Ornio, kay chin Badi eyen,	Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.
Amy khatsada nadakchion toye ant nadayi,	Give us this day our daily bread.
kay Radonaye aut amy Sochin, apo ant radonem amy Sochiakhin,	And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.
bagne ant kau chin malaboski, ali abinaye ant tuen Broskaey,	And lead us not into temptation. But deliver us from evil:
kens sai vie Bagalin, kay Fary, kay Barhaniaan, chinania sendabey.	For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.
Amien.	Amen.



The Formoſan Alphabet

Name	Power				Figure			Name
Am̃	A	a̲	ao					
Mem̃	M	m̃	m					
Neñ	N	ñ	n					
Taph	T	th	t					
Lam̃do	L	ll	l					
Sam̃do	S	ch	s					
Vomera	V	w	u					
Bagdo	B	b	b					
Hamno	H	kh	h					
Pedlo	P	pp	p					
Kaphi	K	k	x					
Om̃da	O	o	ω					
Ilda	I	y	i					
Xatara	X	xh	x					
Dam	D	th	d					
Zamphi	Z	tſ	z					
Epſi	E	ε	η					
Fandem̃	F	ph	f					
Raw	R	rh	r					
Gomera	G	g	j					

T. Slater ſculp.

Albert Le Baron

Le Baron (a pseudonym) attended an outdoor seance while on summer vacation in 1894 and was overcome by a "psycho-somatic force" inducing a motor disturbance of the jaw, through which an alien voice ("unearthly, awful, loud and weird") burst out "Oh, My People!" Le Baron sought mediumistic counsel and submitted to occult experiments, including those of glossolalia, clairaudience, and automatic writing. He testified to the physical, psychic, spontaneous automatism of these experiences, but abandoned his "experiment" within a year. Printed here is a poem given in trance that vacillates phonetically between avant-garde sound poetry and a Bing Crosby–Bob Hope road movie. The disarmingly maudlin "translation" that accompanies it is metrically indebted to Longfellow's Hiawatha, *and, like the automatic writing experiments by J. G. G. Wilkinson (*Improvisations from the Spirit, *1857), suggest that automatism finally conforms to the predominant "voice-over" of its age.*

Glossolalia

Ede pelute kondo nedode
Igla tepete kompto pele
Impe odode inguru lalele
Omdo resene okoro pododo
Igme odkondo nefulu kelala
Nene pokonto sefo lodelu
Impe telala feme olele
Igde pekondo raog japate
Rele pooddo ogsene ly mano.

I have been looking, looking for daylight.
   Ages have flown and the years have grown dark;
Over the hilltops the sun is now shining,
   Far from the sky comes the song of the lark.
Beauty is dawning, the darkness is passing,
Far up the vales fly the songs of the light.
Into the cities the joy will be spreading,
Into the by-ways the light will be spread;
Glory has come to the lost son of man!

What follows is Le Baron's assessment of the experience of speaking in tongues, as printed in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* (volume XII).

In the attempt subsequently to explain the foregoing "foreign tongues" I arranged nine different theories from which the reader may take his choice.

First Theory. The sentences are all the work of a powerful unconscious imagination, and the sentences do not possess the natural consonantal and vowel elements of a language at all.

Second Theory. They are brand new ideas in old and foreign verbal husks, the forms of which were latent in man's subconsciousness at birth.

Third Theory. The consonantal and vowel combinations are but the articulate shells of very ancient ideas latent in this man's subconsciousness at birth, but out of the shells of which the meanings have been eaten up or metamorphosed by some at present unknown law of mental evolution, but are not now to be considered as ideas at all.

Fourth Theory. They are none of the foregoing, but are new and actual presentations of real and new ideas in a foreign tongue.

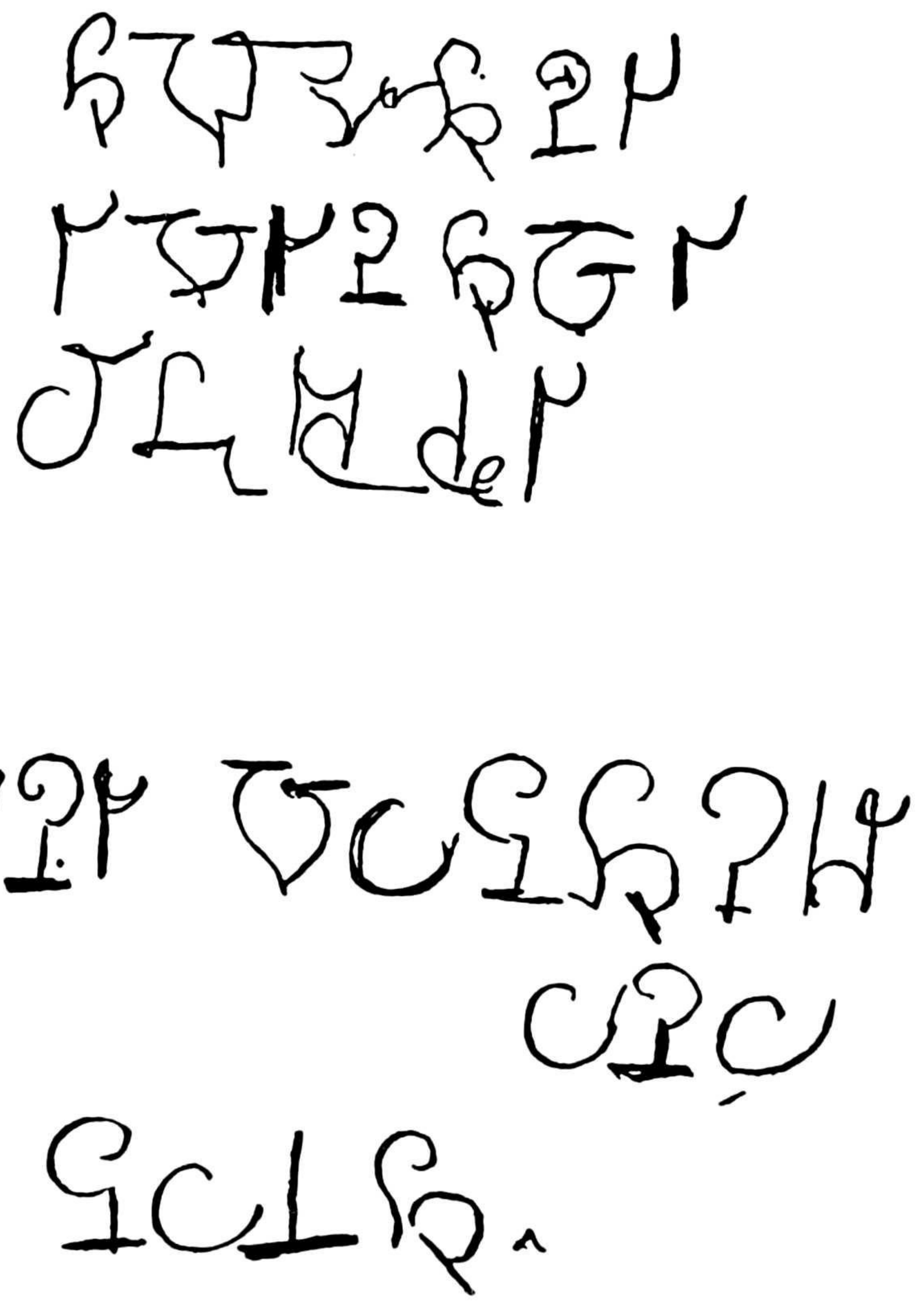
Fifth Theory. They are none of the foregoing, but a ludicrous and silly mistake of the man's imagination allied to some species of humorous hallucination and are not to be considered seriously, or they are a perjury, or a ghastly jest, or a very profound mental trick, or the loose jargon of a maniac.

Sixth Theory. They are none of the foregoing, but are a species of scientific telepathy, and the consonantal and vowel combinations come from some morally indifferent, sublimely good, or awfully naughty source, and which is subject to the will of the man.

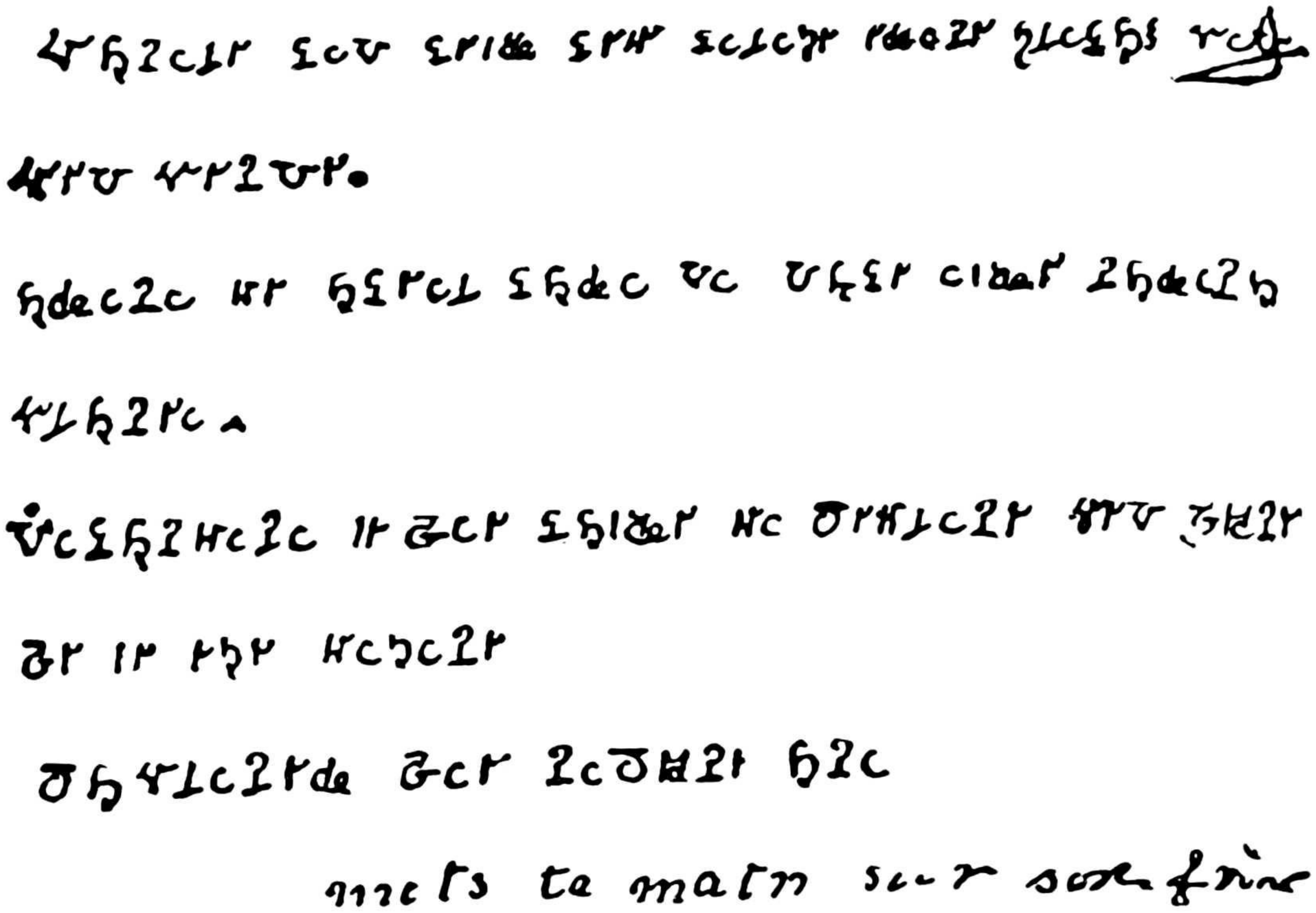
Seventh Theory. Notwithstanding he says he never knew or heard these consonantal and vowel combinations before he uttered them, he may be in some very mysterious way deceiving himself.

Eighth Theory. That it may not be beyond human belief that he is unconsciously in possession of a similar principle or intuitive linguistic power said to be possessed at this day by the higher adepts of India, or the Grand Lama of Thibet, or the Rosicrucians, by the means of which an unknown language is spoken by purely intuitive processes unknown to the analysis of western mental philosophy.

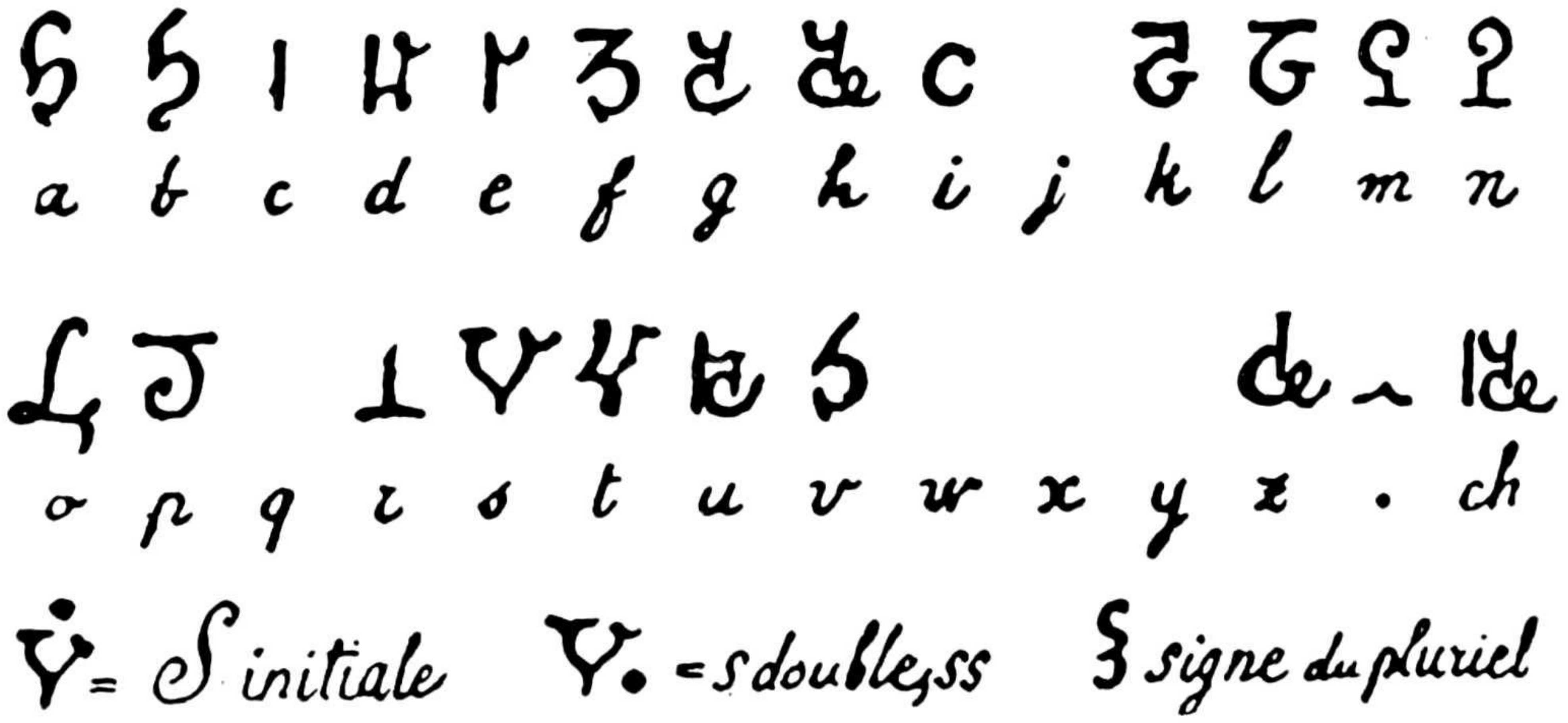
Ninth Theory. That these consonantal and vowel combinations and their intuitive vocal adjustments may be startling scientific hints of mental forces latent in everybody, and which if studied, generalized, verified, systematized, and seriously investigated by philosophers might prove of incalculable benefit to the human race, but which could find no encouragement for expression in the nineteenth century because of the fierce and mocking intolerance of the conservative dogmas of the age.



Seance of August 22, 1897. First Martian text written by Mlle. Smith (according to a visual hallucination).


mets ta main sur son front

Seance of September 12, 1897. Written by Mlle. Smith incarnating Astané (then Léopold for the French words at the end).


a b c d e f g h i j k l m n
o p q r s t u v w x y z . ch
= S initiale
= s doubles ss
signe du pluriel

Martian alphabet.

A.E.

A.E. (George Russell, 1867–1835) was one of Ireland's most prominent and esteemed public figures during his lifetime. Politically influential in economics, agricultural policy, and journalism, A.E. was also instrumental in shaping cultural revival as cofounder of the Irish National Theatre in 1903, as patron of aspiring artists and writers, and through his own stories, novels, poems, essays, and paintings. A.E., like his close friend W. B. Yeats, was drawn to the occult, and was a lifelong Theosophist. The pseudonym "AE" was adapted from Aeon, the Gnostic term for a realm of primal salvation. The Candle of Vision *(1918) is a spiritual autobiography. In the following extract, A.E. contemplates the ancient doctrine of the book of nature. In the ancient literature, he notes, there is a "belief in a complete circle of correspondences between every root sound in the human voice and elements, forms, and colours, and that the alphabet was sacred in character."*

From *The Candle of Vision*

Intuition

. . . "Every flower was a thought. The trees were speech. The grass was speech. The winds were speech. The waters were speech." But what does that convey? Many feel ecstasy at the sight of beautiful natural objects, and it might be said it does not interpret emotion precisely to make a facile reference to a divine world. I believe of nature that it is a manifestation of Deity, and that, because we are partakers in the divine nature, all we see has affinity with us; and though now we are as children who look upon letters before they have learned to read, to the illuminated spirit its own being is clearly manifested in the universe even as I recognise my thought in the words I write. . . . Because of these affinities the spirit swiftly by intuition can interpret nature to itself even as our humanity instinctively comprehends the character betrayed by the curve of lips or the mood which lurks within haunting eyes.

. . . I tried to light the candle on my forehead to peer into every darkness in the belief that the external universe of nature had no more exquisite architecture than the internal universe of being, and that the light could only reveal some lordlier chambers of the soul, and whatever speech the inhabitant used must be fitting for its own sphere, so I became a pupil of the spirit and tried as a child to learn the alphabet at the knees of the gods.

I was led first to brood upon the elements of human speech by that whisper of the word "Aeon" out of the darkness, for among the many thoughts I had at the time came the thought that speech may originally have been intuitive. I discarded the idea with regard to that word, but the general speculation remained with me, and I recurred to it again and again, and began brooding upon the significance of separate letters, and had related many letters to abstractions or elements, when once again, seemingly by chance, I took down a book from a shelf. It was a volume of the Upanishads, and it opened at a page where my eye caught this: "From that Self came the air, from air fire, from fire water, from water earth." I quote from a distant memory but the words are, I think, close enough. What excited me was that I had already discovered what I thought were the sound equivalents for the self, motion, fire, water and earth; and the order of the cosmic evolution of the elements suggested in the passage quoted led me to consider whether there was any intellectual sequence in the human sound equivalents of elements and ideas. I then began to rearrange the roots of speech in their natural order from throat sounds, through dental to labials, from A which begins to be recognisable in the throat to M in the utterance of which the lips are closed. An intellectual sequence of ideas became apparent. This encouraged me to try and complete the correspondences arrived at intuitively. I was never able to do this. Several sounds failed, however I brooded upon them, to suggest their intellectual affinities, and I can only detail my partial discoveries and indicate where harmonies may be found between my own intuitions about language and the roots of speech and in what primitive literature are intuitions akin to my own.

In trying to arrive at the affinities of sound with thought I took letter after letter, brooding upon them, murmuring them again and again, and watching intensely every sensation in consciousness, every colour, form or idea which seemed evoked by the utterance. No doubt the sanity of the boy who walked about the roads at night more than thirty years ago murmuring letters to himself with the reverence of a mystic murmuring the Ineffable Name might have been questioned by any one who knew that he was trying to put himself in the place of his Aryan ancestors, and to find as they might have found the original names for earth, air, water, fire, the forces and elements of the nature which was all about them. Even as in the myth in Genesis beings were named by the earliest man, so I invited the Heavenly Man to renew for me that first speech, and to name the elements as they were by those who looked up at the sky, and cried out the name of the fire in the sky from a God-given intuition.

The Language of the Gods

If I interpreted rightly that dweller in the mind, the true roots of human speech are vowels and consonants, each with affinity to idea, force, colour and form, the veriest abstractions of these, but by their union into words expressing more complex notions, as atoms and molecules by their union form the compounds of the chemist. It is difficult to discover single words of abstract significance to represent adequately the ideas associated with these rudiments of speech. Every root is charged with significance, being the symbol of a force which is itself the fountain of many energies, even as primordial being when manifested rolls itself out into numberless forms, states of energy and consciousness. The roots of human speech are the sound correspondences of powers which in their combination and interaction make up the universe. The mind of man is made in the image of Deity, and the elements of speech are related to the powers in his mind and through it to the being of the Oversoul.

These true roots of language are few, alphabet and roots being identical. The first root is A, the sound symbol for the self in man and Deity in the cosmos. Its form equivalent is the circle ○. The second root is R, representing motion. Its colour correspondence is red, and its form symbol is the line |.

Motion engenders heat, and the third root following the order from throat sounds to labials is H, the sound correspondence of Heat. Its symbol is the triangle △, and it has affinity with the colour orange.

Motion and heat are the begetters of Fire, the sound equivalent of which is the root L, which in form is symbolised by lines radiating from a point as in this figure ⅄. L is fire, light or radiation, and it is followed in the series of roots by Y which symbolises the reaction in nature against that radiation of energy. It is the sound equivalent of binding, concentration or condensation. Matter in the cosmos is obeying the law of gravitation and gathering into fire-mists preliminary to its knotting into suns and planets. The colour affinity is yellow. In man it is will which focuses energy and concentrates it to a burning-point for the accomplishing of desire. Its form symbol is ᘐ representing a vortex or spiral movement inward, opposing in this the expansion or radiation implied in the root L.

The root which follows Y is W, the sound symbol of liquidity or water. Its form is semilunar, ◡, and I think its colour is green.

We have now descended to earth and with this descent comes dualism, and henceforth all the roots have companion roots. Primordial substance has lost its ethereal character and has settled into a solid or static condition. The two roots which express this are G and K; G is the symbol of earth, as K is of mineral, rock, crystal or hardness of any kind. I could discover with no certainty any colour affinities for either of these roots, and about the forms I am also uncertain though I was moved to relate G with the square □ and K with the square crossed by a diagonal ⟠.

The twin roots next in the series are S and Z, and I can find no better words to indicate the significance of the first than impregnation, inbreathing or insouling. We have reached in evolution the stage when the one life breaks into myriads of lives, which on earth finds its correspondence in the genesis of the cell. Z represents the multiplication, division or begetting of organism from organism. It is the outbreathing or bringing to birth of the seed which is sown. The form symbol of S is, I think, ⊖, and of Z ⊕. I discovered no colour affinities for either.

The duality of roots succeeding this is TH and SH. The first is the sound equivalent of growth, expansion or swelling, and its twin root represents that state where the limit of growth in a particular form is reached and a scattering or dissolution of its elements takes place. In the vegetable world we might find an illustration in the growth and decay of a plant.

After these twain come the duality of T and D. I found great difficulty in discovering words to express the abstractions related to these. Yet in meditating on them with reference to the T, I was continually haunted by the idea of individual action, movement or initiative, and I believe it refers to that state when life divorced from its old interior unity with the source of life, and, confined in a form, begins in its imagination of itself to be an ego, is in a state of outgoing, acts and looks outward, touches and tastes; while D represents the reverse side of that, its reaction or absorption inward to silence, sleep, immobility, abeyance. The form symbol T is + and ⌓ vaguely suggested itself to me as the symbol of D.

There is a parallelism between T and TH as there is between D and SH, T representing movement of the thing by itself while TH represents growth or expansion merely, while D represents the more subjective sinking of a thing into abeyance of its powers as SH represents the external resolving of an organism into its elements.

For the dualism of roots J and TCH my intuition failed utterly to discover correlations, and when I had placed the roots in their correct sequence and endeavoured by intellect and reason to arrive at the logical significance these two might have in the series of sounds, I could never satisfy myself that I had come nigh to any true affinity, so I pass these by.

The roots which follow are V and F, of which the first refers to life in water, to all that swims, while F is related to what lives in air and flies. I am doubtful about the form symbols, but colour affinities began here again, and blue suggested itself to me as the correspondence, while the twin roots which come after them, P and B, are related to indigo, the dark blue.

Life has now reached the human stage, is divided into sexes, and P is the sound symbol for life masculine or paternity, while B represents feminine life or maternity.

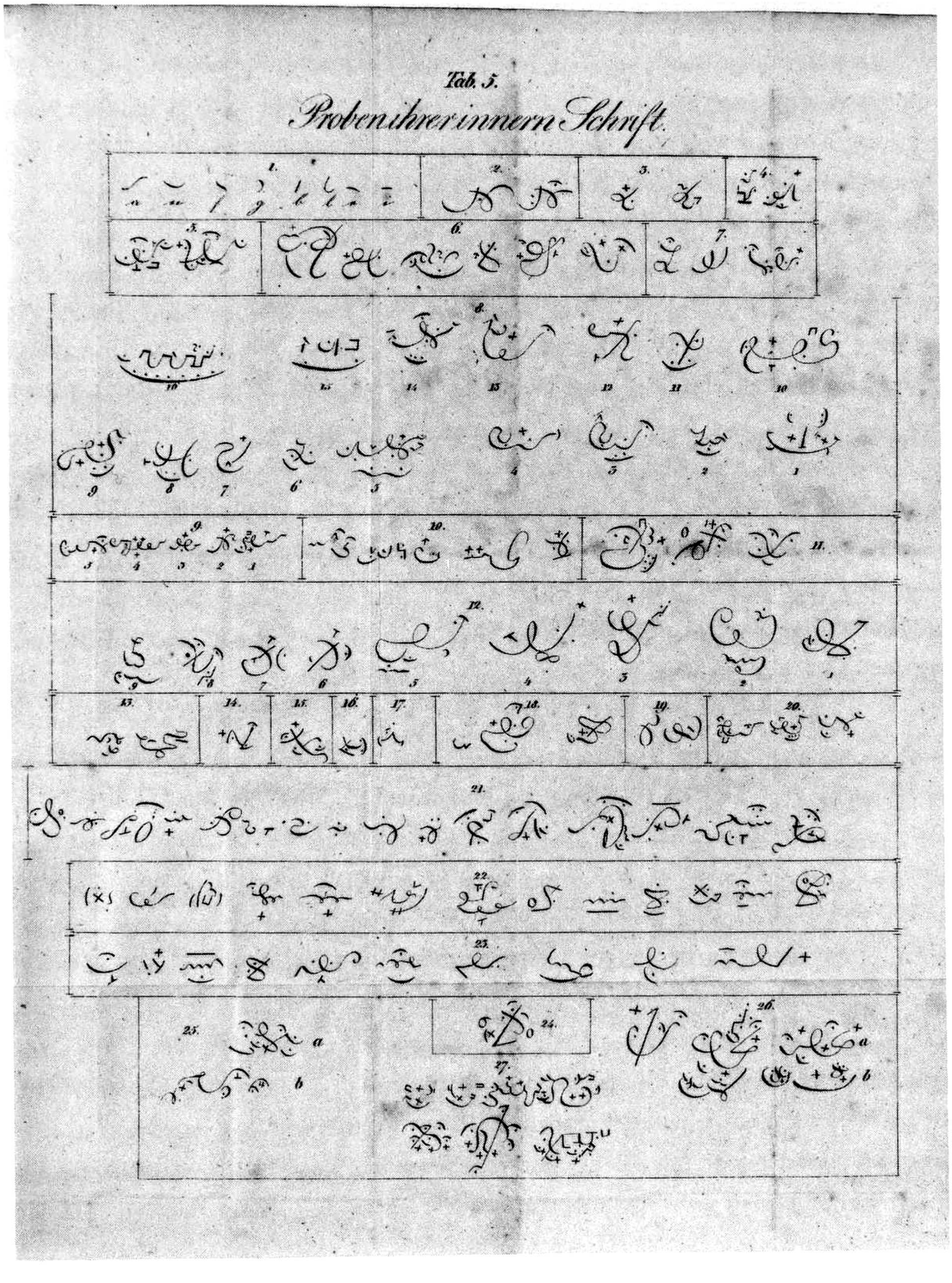
The series closes with N and M. The first of these represents continuance of being, immortality if you will, while the last root, in the utterance of which the lips are closed, has the sense of finality, it is the close, limit, measure, end or death of things. Their colour affinities are with violet. In all there are twenty-one consonants which with the vowels make up the divine roots of speech.

The vowels are the sound symbols of consciousness in seven moods or states, while the consonants represent states of matter and modes of energy.

I despair of any attempt to differentiate from each other the seven states of consciousness represented by the vowels. How shall I make clear the difference between A where consciousness in man or cosmos begins manifestation, utterance or limitation of itself, and OO where consciousness is returning into itself, breaking from the limitation of form and becoming limitless once more; or E when it has become passional, or I where it has become egoistic, actively intellectual or reasoning, or O where it has become intuitional.

Justinus Kerner

Samples of the Inner Script


Tab. 5.
Proben ihrer innern Schrift.

Explanation of the table "Samples of the Inner Script":

1. Single letters.
2. God with and God without number sign.
3. Father with and Father without number sign.
4. says: you are in my thoughts forever.
5. Blissful be my year!
6. script which remains unexplained.
7. says: save me from my misery!
8. Word 1) means: Thy paths of truth, 2) and of love, 3) benevolence and greatness, 4) are unfathomable, 5) o Jehovah! 6) and 7) wonderful is Thine advice, 8) and 9) holy and strong 10) is Thy power through Thy 11) son, 12) which Thou 13) hast given to us. 14) Thou hast 15) redeemed us through him, 16) for ever Hallelujah.
9. 1) No hour, 2) o Lord! 3) shall 4) pass, in which 5) I do not thank Thee.
10. says: my friend, you did much to me.
11. is a magic word, which she used for an amulet, and which in her language is called: Elohim Majda Djonem.
12. 1) from the depth of Thine inmost being 2) poureth out 3) what was 4) and what is: 5) holiness and truth. 6) Love for Thy neighbor and for virtue, 7) sins, 8) remorse 9) and forgiveness.
13. I live.
14. world.
15. Bianachli stands on the ring of life and the script says: I am in sighing, or as expressed on the ring of sun: inimical feeling.
16. says: impatience.
17. says: lichna.
18. is her name.
19. Posi anin cotta, or the ring is completed.
20. Comfort me, since my time has come.
23. script which remained unexplained.
24. my spouse.

NOTE: glosses for number 21, 22, 25, and 26 are omitted in Kerner's text.

Translated by Anette Guse

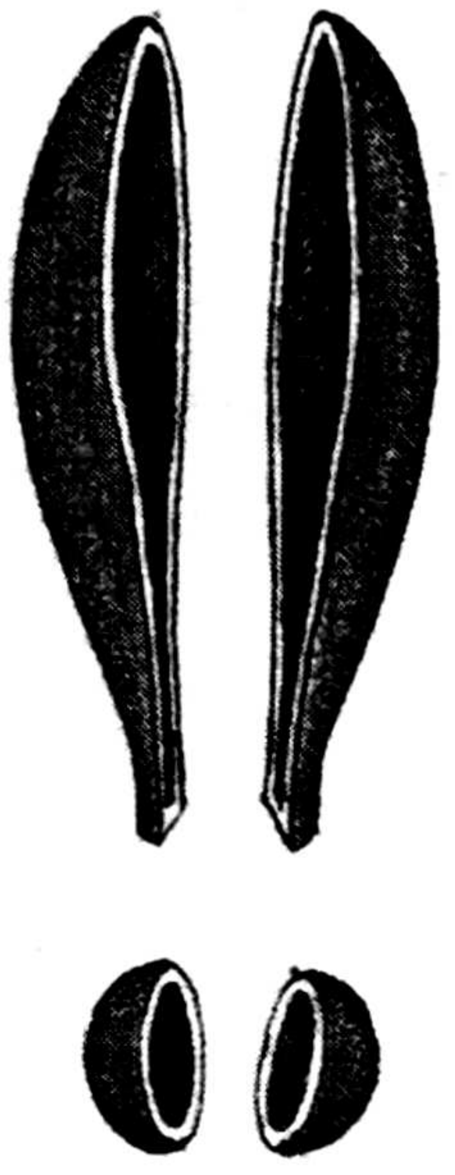
Fictive Encounters

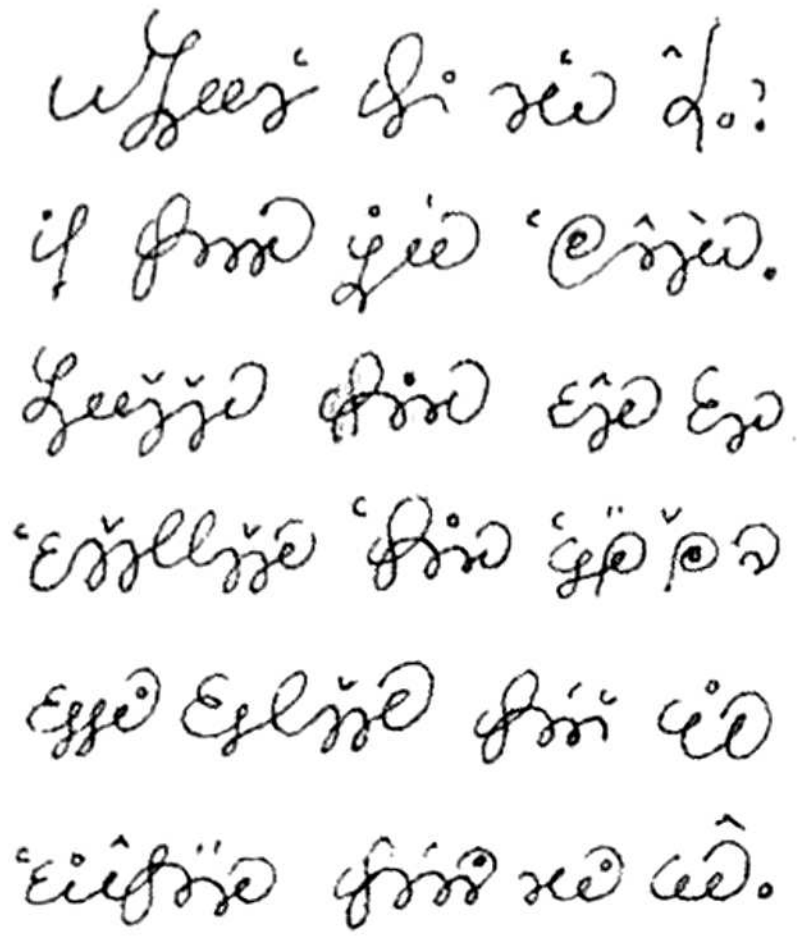
The imaginary voyage is a prodigious genre unto itself, and an inevitable component of the trope of elsewhere is the confrontation with alien tongues. During the seventeenth-century preoccupation with universal languages—spurred by enticing reports of Chinese in the magisterial tomes of the Jesuit polymath Athanasius Kircher—numerous voyage fictions were dedicated explicitly to linguistic fantasy.[1] *Francis Godwin's Lunarians, in* The Man in the Moone *(1638), deploy a language inscribed on musical staves—evidence of reports that the Chinese, in addition to their enigmatic hieroglyphics, speak intonationally. Godwin's hero apprehends lunar speech as composed "not so much of words and letters, as of tunes and uncouth sounds, that no letters can express." Notably contemporaneous is Francis Lodwick's* A Common Writing *(1647), which uses musical notation as the basis of a universal language writing (see "Transpositions," p. 211 below). The lunar elite converse in musical tones in Cyrano de Bergerac's* Voyage to the Moon *(1649, published posthumously in 1657), where their speech is not restricted to the vocal organs but can be extended to lutes and other instruments. There are also musical books "made wholly for the Ears, and not the Eyes. So that when any Body has a mind to read in it, he winds up that Machine, with a great many little Strings; then he turns the Hand to the Chapter which he desires to hear, and straight, as from the Mouth of a Man, or a Musical Instrument, proceed all the distinct and different Sounds, which the Lunar Grandees make use of, for expressing their Thoughts instead of Language." The lunar folk also make prodigious use of gestures: "Their Members, being used to gesticulate their Conceptions, move so quick, that one would not think it to be a Man that spoke, but a Body that trembled."*

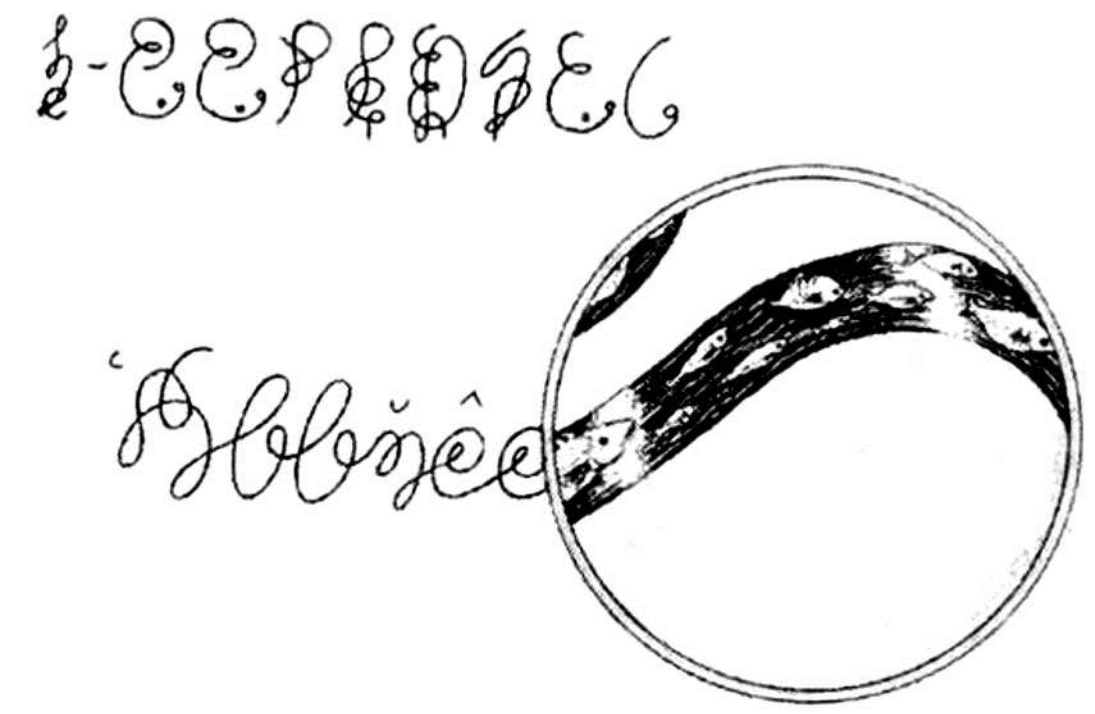
Rabelais's work contributes a version of utopia and cross-cultural linguistic encounter, as well as a tale, in a characteristically ludic episode, of the thawing words aboard a ship. Emerson cites the persistence of this trope as proof that "a good story crosses all frontiers. The popular incident of Baron Münchhausen, who hung his bugle up by the kitchen fire and the frozen tune thawed out, is found in Greece in Plato's time. Antiphanes, one of Plato's friends, laughingly compared his writings to a city where the words froze in the air as soon as they were pronounced, and the next summer, when they were warmed and melted by the sun, the people heard what had been spoken in the winter." Many texts of the voyage genre appear to offer more scholarly data, but they are no less fanciful for all that. Gabriel de Foigny's A New Discovery of Terra Incognita Australis, *purporting to be the memoirs of a James Sadeur (1676 in French, 1693 English), represents Australians communicating by signs organized into philosophical units—"Which is of wonderful advantage . . . because as soon as they know how to read, which is commonly at three years old, they apprehend at the same time the Properties of all* *manners of Beings." Denis de Vairasse's* History of the Sevarites *(1675 and 1679) describes a language with over a hundred prepositions. In Simon Tyssot de Patot's* Voyages et aventures de Jacques Masse *(1710), nouns and verbs are reciprocally derived, with a rational grammar so functional that it could be learned in three months.*

This extensive tradition has been elaborated in the twentieth century by science fiction and fantasy. The Klingon language of Star Trek *has its own newsletter; and another journal of "Mythopoeic Linguistic Fellowship,"* Parma Eldalamberon: The Book of Elven Tongues, *is largely devoted to J. R. R. Tolkien's Middle-Earth. Among the more sophisticated sci-fi expositions of language are Jack Vance's* The Languages of Pao *(1958), Samuel R. Delany's* Babel-17 *(1966), and Ian Watson's* The Embedding *(1973). The entire genre of sci-fi tends to be suffused with a sense of the artifice and precariousness of human language(s); but, as can be imagined, almost any alternate-world scenario needs to evoke semiotic otherness, so there is an inevitable superficiality to many of its representations of linguistic difference—a symptom parodically illustrated in C. M. Kornbluth's story "Time Bum," with its pastiche of an alien jargon that turns out to be English defamiliarized orthographically ("Thi Proskyoot'rz Ofis sed thi deth pen'lti will be askt in vyoo 'v thi heinus neitch'r 'v thi ofens, hwitch thret'nz thi hwol fabrik 'v Twenti-Fifth Sentch'ri ekzistens"). A particularly thoughtful account of interspecies communication is Olaf Stapledon's* Sirius *(1944), in which a mentally enhanced sheepdog is nurtured by a human family as one of their own, and ends up augmenting their cultural devotion to the humanities with his own unique "caninities"—in which poems, for instance, are not verbal constructs but olfactory itineraries. In Stapledon's vision, significantly, it is not linguistic difference that represents the greatest impediment to Sirius's humanization, but his lack of hands.*

Stanislaw Lem's work, while ostensibly science fiction, is suffused by a polymathic intellect, the ideal medium for which may be his compilations A Perfect Vacuum *and* Imaginary Magnitude, *which consist of reviews of and prefaces to fictive books. In "Eruntics," Lem's persona Reginald Gulliver addresses the prospect of microbial speech, the coordination of millions of generations of bacteria to collectively emit basic signals (a comparison might also be made with Borges's story "The Handwriting of God"). In Thomas Pynchon's* Gravity's Rainbow, *a character speculatively associates letters with molecules: "how they are taken out from the coarse flow—shaped, cleaned, rectified, just as you once redeemed your letters from the lawless, the mortal streaming of human speech." And like the combinatory potential of letters, molecules "can be modulated, broken, recoupled, redefined, co-polymerized one to the other in worldwide chains that will surface now and then over long molecular silences, like the seen parts of a tapestery." The strictly pictorial publication* Codex Seraphinianus *(1979) reveals a similar preoccupation with the microscopic supplementarity of language:*







While it superficially resembles the Codex, *Max Ernst's* Maximiliana *(1964), presented here, exalts the doodle to a magisterial ideographic plenitude.*

The hieroglyphic allure behind the imaginary voyage of the seventeenth century persisted and was if anything enhanced by the increased familiarity with Asia and by the discovery of the Rosetta Stone in 1799, which enabled Champollion to decipher Egyptian hieroglyphs. These developments had a profound impact on American writers such as Poe, Emerson, Thoreau, Melville, and Whitman. Poe's Narrative of A. Gordon Pym *(1838) is a late contribution to the imaginary voyage genre, and suitably concludes with a vision of mystic script purportedly combining Ethiopian (* *) and Arabic (* *) in an Egyptian word (* ΠⲀϢⲨⲢⲎⲤ, *) meaning "region of the south." Poe's fanciful attributions are unfounded, but they are thematically used to evoke the extremities of darkness and light, and his trope of the ultimate horror ("Tekeli-li!") is* whiteness*—prefiguring Melville's famous whale. (Needless to say,* Moby-Dick *is a book that variously tropes the book and the phenomenon of writing on almost every page, and should be consulted as the most expansive of all "fictive encounters" with language.) John Riddell's cartoon "H" from* Criss-Cross, *reproduced here, revisits the trope of the imaginary voyage by staging an oneiric descent of lettristic dimensions, in which a catnapping writer finds himself trapped, "a prisoner of my own text!"*

Murray Schafer, a composer and theorist of soundscape, indulges in the pretense of temporal displace-

ment as a way of addressing the internalized difference that writing brings to language. Lewis Carroll's "Stanza of Anglo-Saxon Poetry" (later expanded to become the famous "Jabberwocky") solicits a comparable glamor of disjunction. The challenge of deciphering dead languages entails no voyage in space but a journey back in time, a temporal displacement that enters the textual transcript as a function of spacing *in Schwerner's* The Tablets. The Tablets *enlists a variety of annotative marks to indicate lacunae and indecipherable elements of an "original" text, on the model of scholarly reconstruction of the mutilated texts of antiquity. Poe's little-known tale "X-ing a Paragrab" resorts to a comparable format. In this send-up of journalistic competition in a backwater town called Nopolis (a nod to More's Utopia), one of the story's newsmen satirizes an adversary's stylistic tendency to exclamation points and the expressive "oh!" by the use of as many* o*'s as possible. Unfortunately, the compositor's supply of the vowel is limited, so he opts to* x *the paragraph: "Sx, hx, Jxhn! hxw nxw! Txld yxu sx, yxu knxw. Dxn't crxw, anxther time, befxre yxu're xut xf the wxxds! Dxes yxur mxther knxw yxu're xut? Xh, nx, nx! sx gx hxme at xnce, nxw, Jxhn, tx yxur xdixus xld wxxds xf Cxncxrd!" This "x-traordinary and in-X-plicable" publication befuddles the townfolk. "X, everybody knew, was an unknown quantity; but in this case. . . there was an unknown quantity of X."*

Language is an arrangement of the world, but in a book language is literally the *world.*[2] *This is the inaugural recognition of Madeline Gins's* Word Rain *(1969), the title of which implicates the atomic theory of Democritus in its Lucretian equation of atoms with letters (see "Clinamen," p. 532 below).*[3] *The particulate resonance given by the combinatory logic of the alphabet animates the parts of Gins's book: "I take the letter b and move it toward ack, it moves back into me. h has become involved with as. Needless to say, t, l, r, d, s, w, b, c, and v may become involved with ent, etc." Because language is intricated in consciousness, such apparently ludic gestures take on a portentous weight: "In order to isolate myself as the process of thinking, I must think of thinking or more conveniently read my reading. This is an extensive joke in the manner of the irony of names, the belly laugh of birth or the Chaplinesque persistence of consciousness." The sketches of* Word Rain *have subsequently been filled out in Gins's unique collaborative investigations with Arakawa,* The Mechanism of Meaning, *and given an explicitly fictional cast in her novel* Helen Keller or Arakawa, *from which we excerpt one chapter. Gins's temperamental inclination to paradox and its humors makes Keller an uncanny choice. The tactile reserve enlarged to the full dimensionality of language in the case of the blind and deaf woman provides an enigmatically appropriate interface with the (largely conceptual) artwork of Arakawa. Gins's selection here is supplemented by a seventeenth-century fable by George Dalgarno illustrating the pratfalls and menaces of discrepant communication, as the blind Homer encounters the deaf Aesop. In Dalgarno's text, as in the others in this section, to imagine is to precipitate a fiction; so to imagine language is to take one's fictive bearings on the fiction of all fictions.*

1 Cornelius, in his history of the genre, also includes speculative works that elaborate on the properties of other hypothetically inhabited planets, including their languages: Bernard de Fontenelle's *A Conversation on the Plurality of Worlds* (1687) and Christian Huygens's *Cosmotheoros* (1698).

2 The most famous fictional realization of this condition, of course, is Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* in which the sociopolitical order is ideologically held in place by an official language, Newspeak. The aim of Newspeak is "to narrow the range of thought." "In the end we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it. Every concept that can ever be needed will be expressed by exactly *one* word, with its meaning rigidly defined and all its subsidiary meanings rubbed out and forgotten."

3 The full title, as printed on the title page, is: *WORD RAIN OR A DISCURSIVE INTRODUCTION TO THE INTIMATE PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS OF G,R,E,T,A, G,A,R,B,O, IT SAYS.*

François Rabelais

From *Gargantua and Pantagruel*

How Pantagruel *found* Panurge, *whom he loved all his life-time.*

One day as *Pantagruel* was taking a walk without the City, towards *St. Antonies* Abbey, discoursing and philosophating with his own servants and some other Scholars, he met with a young man of very comely stature, and surpassing handsome in all the lineaments of his body, but in several parts thereof most pitifully wounded.

. . . Now as he was just amongst them, *Pantagruel* said unto him, Let me intreat you, (*friend*) that you may be pleased to stop here a little, and answer me to that which I shall ask you, and I am confident you will not think your time ill-bestowed; for I have an extream desire (according to my ability), to give you some supply in this distresse, wherein I see you are; because I do very much commiserate your case, which truly moves me to great pity; Therefore (my friend) tell me, who you are? Whence you come? whither you go? what you desire? and what your name is? the companion answered him in the *Dutch* tongue, thus.

Juncker, Gott geb euch glück unnd hail. Zuvor, lieber Juncker, ich las euch wissen das da ir mich von fragt, ist ein arm unnd erbarmglich ding, unnd wer vil darvon zu sagen, welches euch verdruslich zu hœren, unnd mir zu erzelen wer, wievol die Poeten unnd Orators vorzeiten haben gesagt in irem Sprüchen unnd Sentenzen, das die Gedechtnus des Ellends unnd Armuot vorlangs erlitten ist ain grosser Lust. My friend (said *Pantagruel,*) I have no skill in that gibberish of yours; therefore, if you would have us to understand you, speak to us in some other language; then did the drole answer him thus.

Al barildim gotfano dech min brin alabo dordin falbroth ringuam albaras. Nin porth zadikim almucathin milko prin al elmim enthoth dal heben ensouim; kuthim al dum alkatim nim broth dechoth porth min michais im endoth; pruch dal maisoulum hol moth dansrilrim lupaldas im voldemoth. Nin hur diavosth mnarbotim dal gousch palfrapin duch im scoth pruch galeth dal Chinon min foulchrich al conin butathen doth dal prim. Do you understand none of this, said *Pantagruel* to the company? I beleeve (said *Epistemon,*) that this is the language of the *Antipodes,* and such a hard one that the devil himself knowes not what to make of it. Then, said *Pantagruel,* Gossip, I know not if the walls do comprehend the meaning of your words, but none of us here doth so much as understand one syllable of them; then said *my blade* again.—

Signor mio, voi videte per exemplo che la cornamusa non suona mai, s'ela non a il ventre pieno; cosi io parimente non vi saprei contare le mie fortune, se prima il tribulato ventre non a la solita refectione, al quale è adviso che le mani et li dente abbui perso il loro ordine naturale et del tuto annichillati. To which *Epistemon* answered as much of the one as of the other, and nothing of either. Then said *Panurge.*

Lard, ghest tholb be sua virtuis be intelligence ass yi body schal biss be naturall relvth, tholb suld of me pety have; for natur hass ulss egualy maide; bot fortune sum exaltit hess and oyis deprevit. Non ye less viois mou virtius deprevit and virtiuss men discrivis, for anen ye lad end iss non gud. Yet lesse said *Pantagruel;* then said my jollie *Panurge.*

Jona andie, guaussa goussyetan behar da erremedio, beharde, versela ysser lan da. Anbates, otoyyes nausu, eyn essassu gourr ay proposian ordine den. Non yssena bayta *fascheria egabe, genherassy badia sadassu noura assia. Aran hondovan gualde eydassu nay dassuna. Estou oussyc eguinan soury hin, er darstura eguy harm, Genicoa plasar vadu.* Are you there (said *Eudemon?*) *Genicoa,* to this (said *Carpalin*) St. *Trinian's* rammer unstitch your bum, for I had almost understood it. Then answered *Panurge.*

Prug frest strinst sorgdmand strochdt drhds pag brledand Gravot Chavigny Pomardiere rusth pkallhdracg Deviniere pres Nays, Bcuille kalmuch monach drupp delmeupplistrincq dlrnd dodelb up drent loch minc stzrinquald de vins ders cordelis hur jocststzampenards. Do you speak Christian (said *Epistemon*) or the *Buffoon* language, otherwise called *patelinois?* Nay, it is the *puzlatory* tongue (said another) which some call *Lanternois.* Then said *Panurge.*

Herre, ie en spreke anders gheen taele dan kersten taele; my dunct nochtans, al en seg ie v niet een wordt, myuen noot v claert ghenonch wat ie beglere; gheest my unyt bermherticheyt yet waer un ïe ghevoet mach zunch. To which answered *Pantagruel,* as much of that: then said *Panurge.*

Señor, de tanto hablar yo soy cansado. Por que supplico a Vostra Reverentia que mire a los preceptos evangeliquos, para que ellos movant Vostra Reverentia a lo qu'es de conscientia, y, sy ellos non bastarent para mover Vostra Reverentia a piedad, supplico que mire a la piedad natural, la qual yo creo que le movra, como es de razon, y con esto non digo mas. Truly (my friend), I doubt not but you can speak divers languages, but tell us that which you would have us to do for you in some tongue, which you conceive we may understand? then said the companion.

Myn Herre, endog jig med inghen tunge talede, lygesom boeen, ocg uskvvlig creatner! myne kleebon, och myne legoms magerhed uudviser allygue klalig huvad tyng meg meest behoff girereb, som aer sandeligh mad och drycke: hwarfor forbarme teg omsyder offvermeg, och bef ael at gyffuc meg nogeth, aff huylket jig kand styre myne groeendes maghe, lygeruss son mand Cerbero en soppe forsetthr. Soa shal tue loeffve lenge och lyksalight: I think really (said *Eusthenes*) that the *Gothes* spoke thus of old, and that, if it pleased God, we would all of us speak so with our tailes. Then again said *Panurge.*

Adoni, scolom lecha. Im ischar harob hal habdeca, bemeherah thithen li kikar lehem, chancathub: 'Laah al Adonai chonen ral'. To which answered *Epistemon,* at this time have I understood him very well; for it is the *Hebrew* tongue most Rhetorically pronounced: Then again said the *Gallant.*

Despota ti nyn panagathe, dioti sy mi uc artodotis? Horas gar limo analiscomenon eme athlios. Ce en to metaxy eme uc eleis udamos, zetis de par emu ha u chre, ce homos philologi pamdes homologusi tote logus te ce rhemata peritta hyparchin, opote pragma afto pasi delon esti. Entha gar anancei monon logi isin, hina pragmata, hon peri amphibetumen, me phosphorus epiphenete. What? (said *Carpalim, Pantagruels* footman), it is *Greek,* I have understood him: and how? hast thou dwelt any while in *Greece?* Then said the *drole* again.

Agonou dont oussys vou denaguez algarou, nou den farou zamist vous mariston ulbrou, fousquez vou brol, tam bredaguez moupreton den goul houst, daguez daguez nou croupys fost bardounnoflist nou grou. Agou paston tol nalprissys hourton los ecbatonous prou dhouquys brol panygou den bascrou noudous caguous goulfren goul oust troppassou. Me thinks I understand him (said *Pantagruel*) for either it is the language of my countrey of *Utopia,* or sounds very like it: and as he was about to have begun some purpose, the companion said,

Jam toties vos per sacra, perque deos deásque omnis obtestatus sum, ut si qua vos pietas permovet, egestatem meam solaremini nec hilum proficio clamans & ejulans: sinite, quæso, sinite, viri impii, quo me fata vocant abire; nec ultrà *vanis vestris interpellationibus obtundatis, memores veteris illius adagii quo venter famelicus auriculis carere dicitur.* Well, my friend, (said *Pantagruel*) but cannot you speak *French?*

How among the Frozen Words, **Pantagruel** *found some odd ones.*

The Skipper made answer; Be not afraid, my Lord, we are on the Confines of the Frozen Sea, on which about the beginning of last Winter happen'd a great and bloody Fight between the *Arimaspians* and the *Nephelibates.* Then the words and cries of Men and Women, the hacking, slashing, and hewing of Battle-axes, the shocking, knocking, and joulting of Armours, and Harnesses, the neighing of Horses, and all other Martial din and noise, froze in the Air; And now the rigour of the Winter being over by the succeeding serenity and warmth of the Weather, they melt and are heard.

By jingo, quoth *Panurge,* the Man talks somewhat like, I believe him; but cou'dn't we see some of 'em? Methinks I have read that on the edge of the Mountain on which *Moses* receiv'd the *Judaic* Law, the People saw the Voices sensibly.—Here, here, said *Pantagruel,* here are some that are not yet thaw'd. He then throw'd us on the Deck whole handfulls of frozen Words, which seem'd to us like your rough Sugar-Plumbs, of many colours, like those us'd in Heraldry, some Words *Gules* [This means also Jests and merry sayings] some *Vert,* some *Azur,* some *Black,* some *Or,* [This means also fair words] and when we had somewhat warm'd them between our Hands, they melted like Snow, and we really heard them, but cou'd not understand them, for it was a Barbarous Gibberish; one of them only that was pretty big, having been warm'd between Fryar *Jhon's* Hands, gave a sound much like that of Chesnuts when they are thrown into the Fire without being first cut, which made us all start. This was the report of a Field-piece in its time, cry'd Fryar *Jhon.*

Panurge pray'd *Pantagruel* to give him some more; but *Pantagruel* told him, that to give words, was the Part of a Lover. Sell me some then, I pray you, cry'd *Panurge.* That's the part of a Lawyer, return'd *Pantagruel;* I would sooner sell you Silence, tho' at a dearer Rate, as *Demosthenes* formerly sold it by the means of his *Argentangina* or Silver Squinsey.

However, he threw three or four Handfulls of them on the Deck, among which I perceiv'd some very sharp words, and some bloody words, which the Pilot said, us'd sometimes to go back and recoil to the place whence they came, but 'twas with a slit weesand; we also saw some terrible words, and some others not very pleasant to the Eye.

When they had been all melted together, we heard a strange noise, hin, hin, hin, hin, his, tick, tock, taack, brededin, brededack, frr, frr, frr, bou, bou, bou, bou, bou, bou, bou, bou, track, track, trr, trr, trr, trrr, trrrrrr, on, on, on, on, on, on, ouououououn, gog, magog, and I do not know what other barbarous words, which the Pilot said, were the noise made by the Charging Squadrons, the shock and neighing of Horses.

Then we heard some large ones go off like Drums and Fifes, and others like Clarions and Trumpets. Believe me, we had very good sport with them. I wou'd fain have sav'd some merry odd words, and have preserv'd them in Oyl, as Ice and Snow are kept, and between clean Straw. But *Pantagruel* would not let me, saying, that 'tis a folly to hoard up what we are never like to want, or have always at hand, odd, quaint, merry and fat words of *Gules* never being scarce among all good and jovial *Pantagruelists.*

Translated by Thomas Urquhart and Peter Le Motteaux

Lewis Carroll

Stanza of Anglo-Saxon Poetry

TWAS BRYLLYG, AND THE SLYTHY TOVES
DID GYRE AND GYMBLE IN THE WABE:
ALL MIMSY WERE THE BOROGOVES;
AND THE MOME RATHS OUTGRABE.

The meanings of the words are as follows:
BRYLLYG. (derived from the verb to BRYL or BROIL). "the time of broiling dinner, i.e. the close of the afternoon"
SLYTHY. (compounded of SLIMY and LITHE). "smooth and active"
TOVE a species of Badger. They had smooth white hair, long hind legs, and short horns like a stag. lived chiefly on cheese
GYRE verb (derived from GYAOUR or GIAOUR, "a dog") "to scratch like a dog"
GYMBLE (whence GIMBLET) to screw out holes in anything
WABE (derived from the verb to SWAB or SOAK) "the side of hill" (from it's being *soaked* by the rain)
MIMSY (whence MIMSERABLE and MISERABLE) "unhappy"
BOROGOVE An extinct kind of Parrot. They had no wings beaks turned up, and made their nests under sun-dials lived on veal
MOME (hence SOLEMOME SOLEMONE and SOLEMN) "grave"
RATH. A species of land turtle Head erect mouth like a shark the fore legs curved out so that the animal walked on it's knees. smooth green body lived on swallows and oysters
OUTGRABE. past tense of the verb to OUTGRIBE (it is connected with the old verb to GRIKE or SHRIKE, from which are derived "shriek" and "creak.") "squeaked"

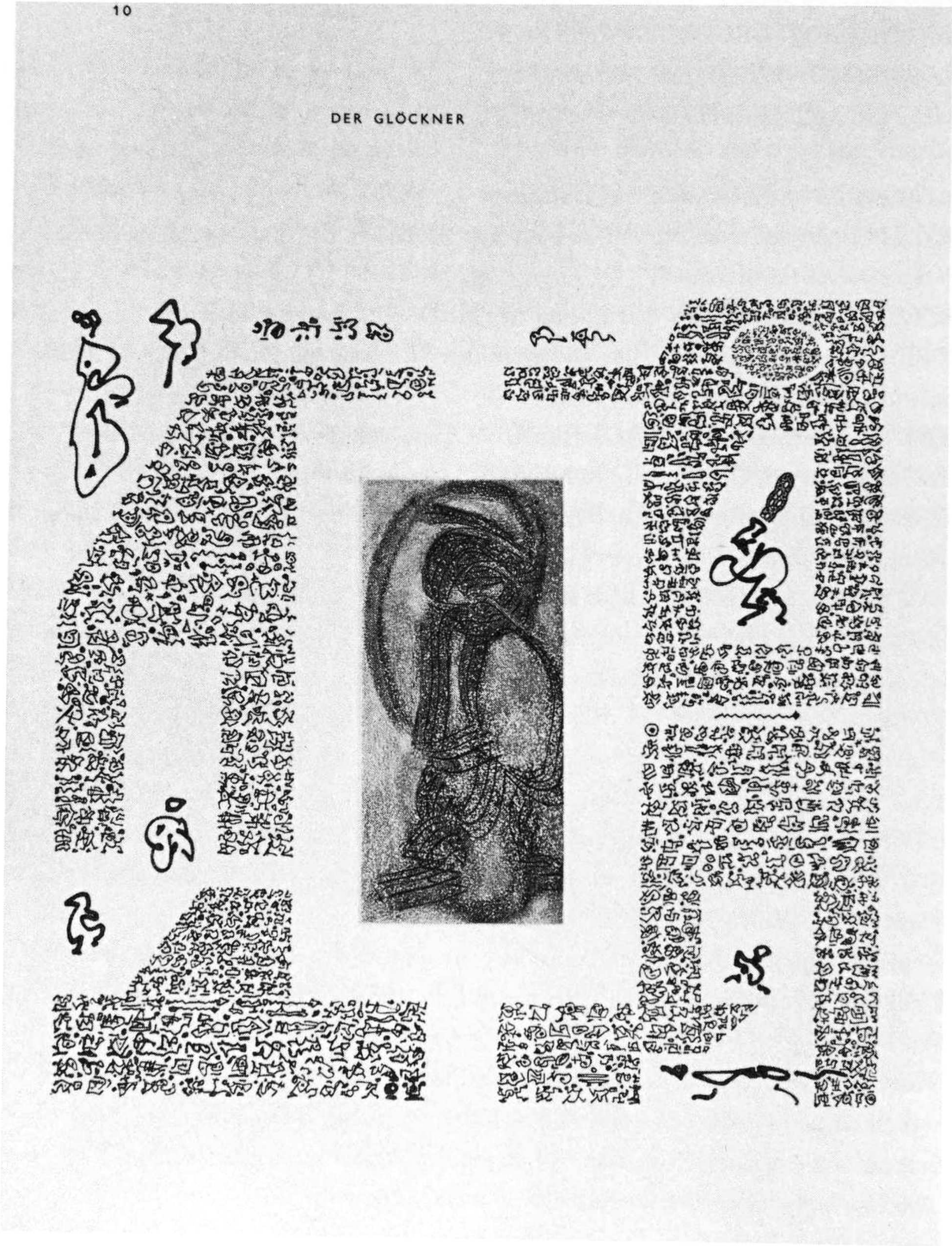
Hence the literal English of the passage is.
"It was evening, and the smooth active badgers were scratching and boring holes in the hill side. all unhappy were the parrots, and the grave turtles squeaked out"

There were probably sun dials on the top of the hill, and the "borogoves" were afraid that their nests would be undermined. The hill was probably full of the nests of "raths," which ran out squeaking with fear on hearing the "toves" scratching outside. This is an obscure, but yet deeply affecting relic of ancient Poetry

Croft 1855 Ed

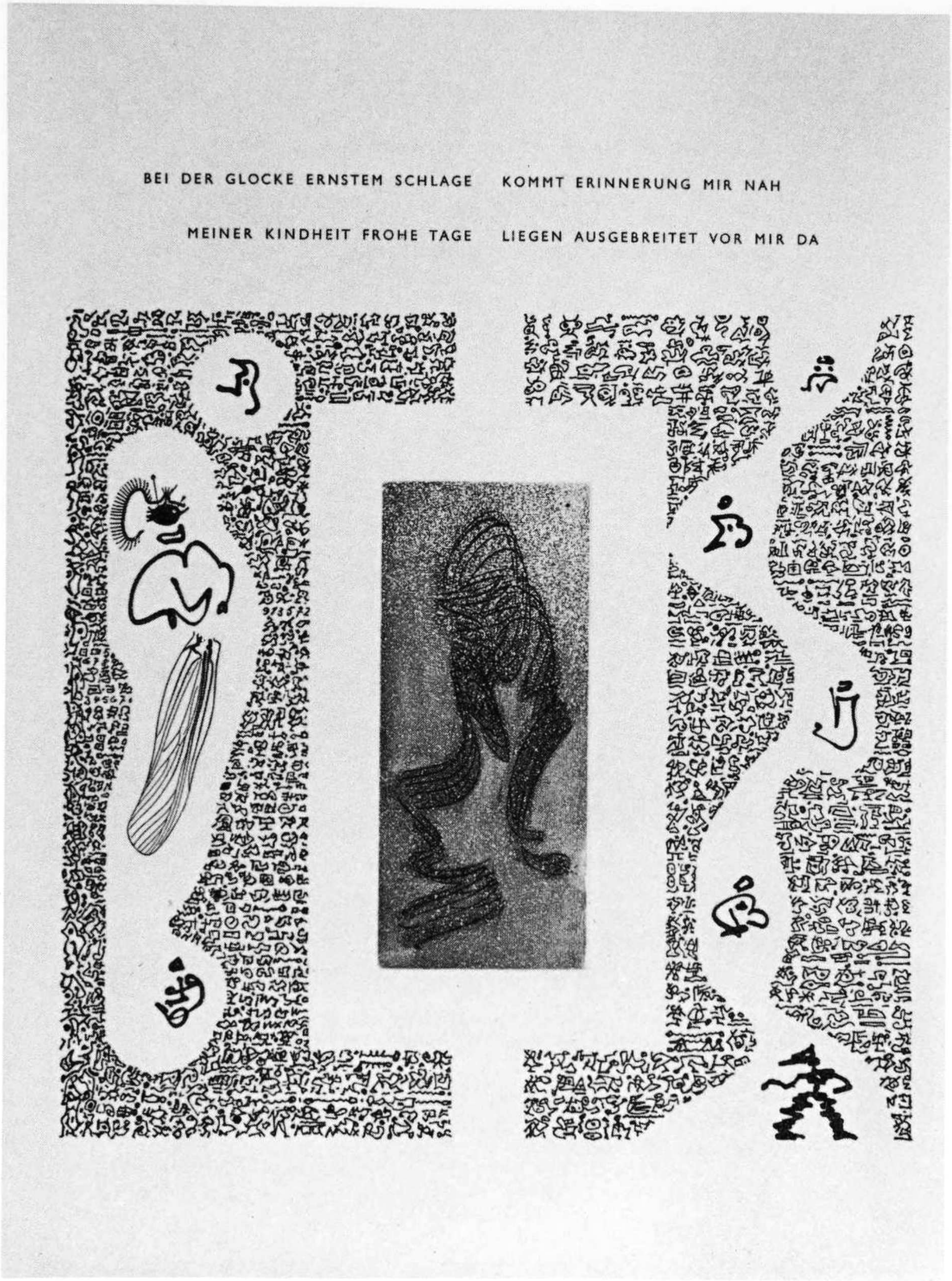
Max Ernst

Maximiliana



10

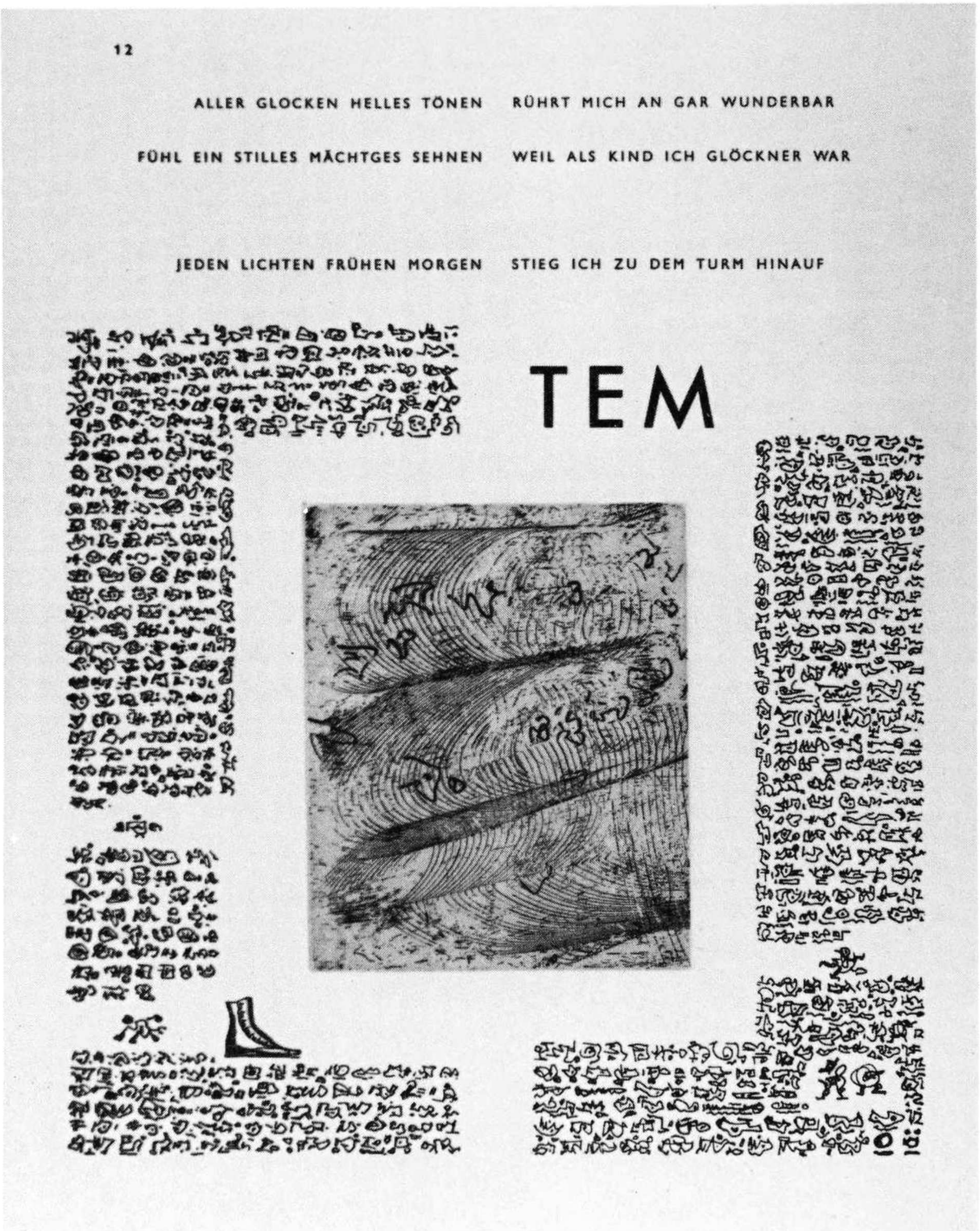
DER GLÖCKNER



BEI DER GLOCKE ERNSTEM SCHLAGE KOMMT ERINNERUNG MIR NAH

MEINER KINDHEIT FROHE TAGE LIEGEN AUSGEBREITET VOR MIR DA

Maximiliana



12

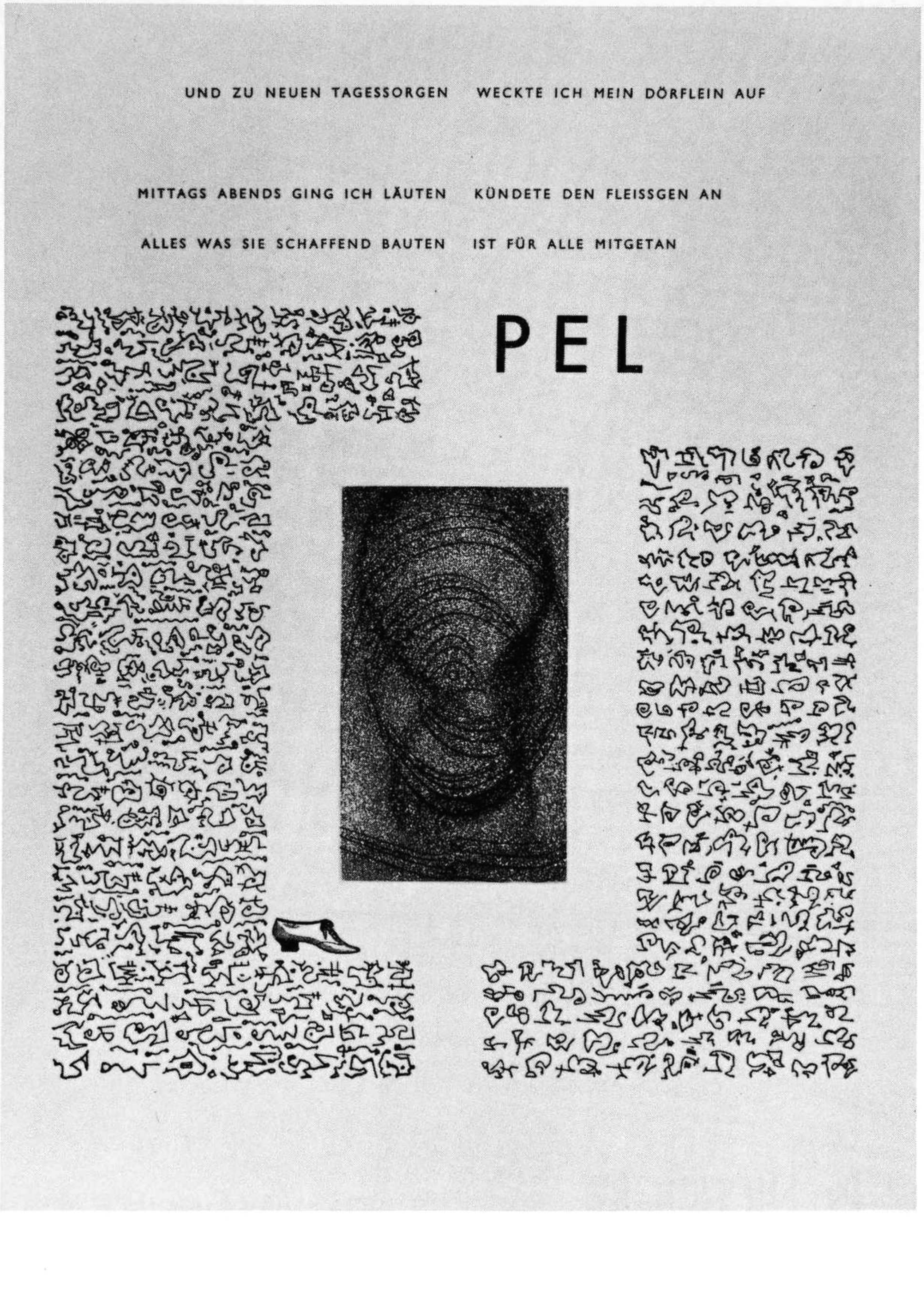
ALLER GLOCKEN HELLES TÖNEN RÜHRT MICH AN GAR WUNDERBAR

FÜHL EIN STILLES MÄCHTGES SEHNEN WEIL ALS KIND ICH GLÖCKNER WAR

JEDEN LICHTEN FRÜHEN MORGEN STIEG ICH ZU DEM TURM HINAUF

TEM

Max Ernst



UND ZU NEUEN TAGESSORGEN WECKTE ICH MEIN DÖRFLEIN AUF

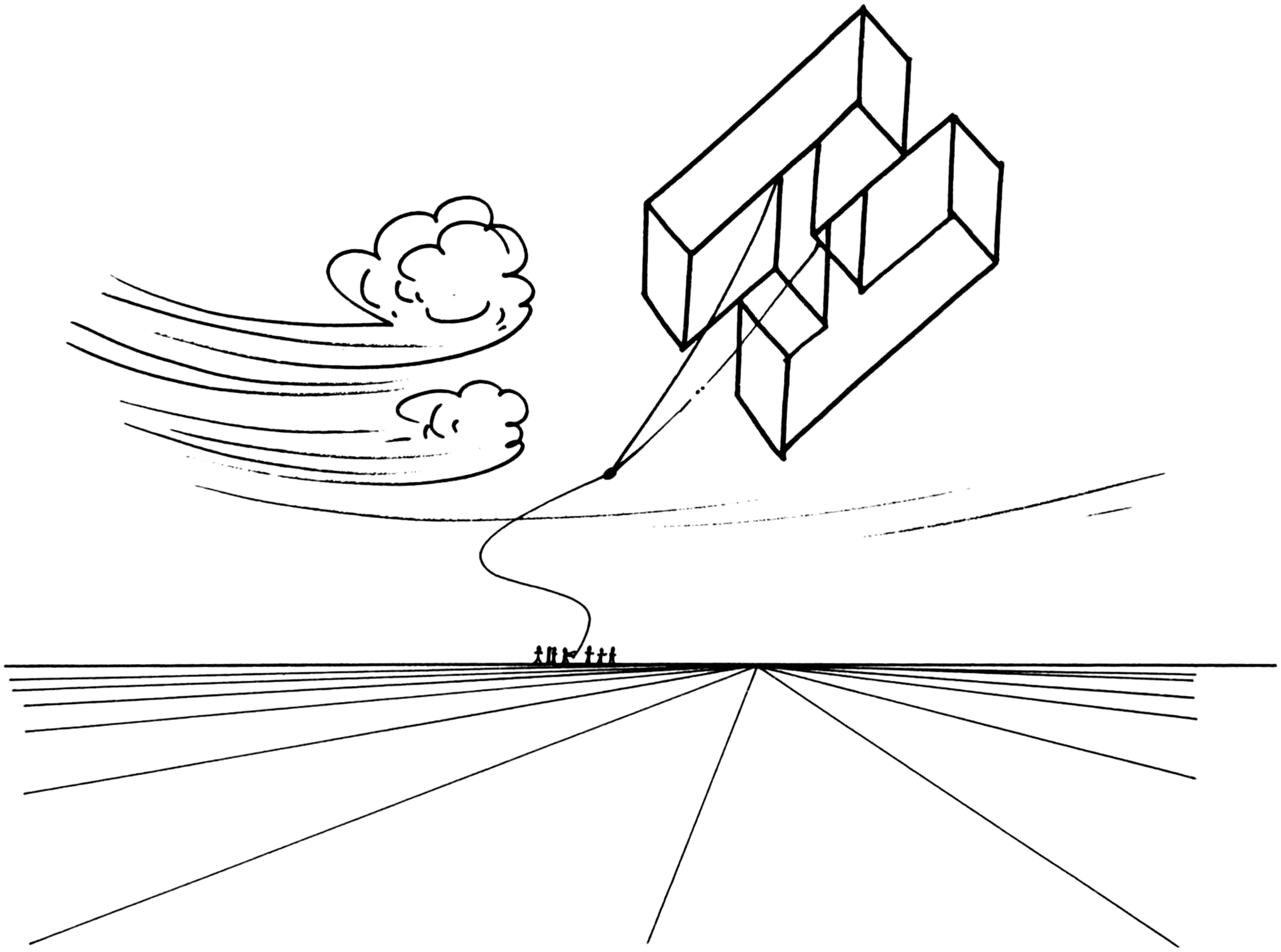
MITTAGS ABENDS GING ICH LÄUTEN KÜNDETE DEN FLEISSGEN AN
ALLES WAS SIE SCHAFFEND BAUTEN IST FÜR ALLE MITGETAN

PEL

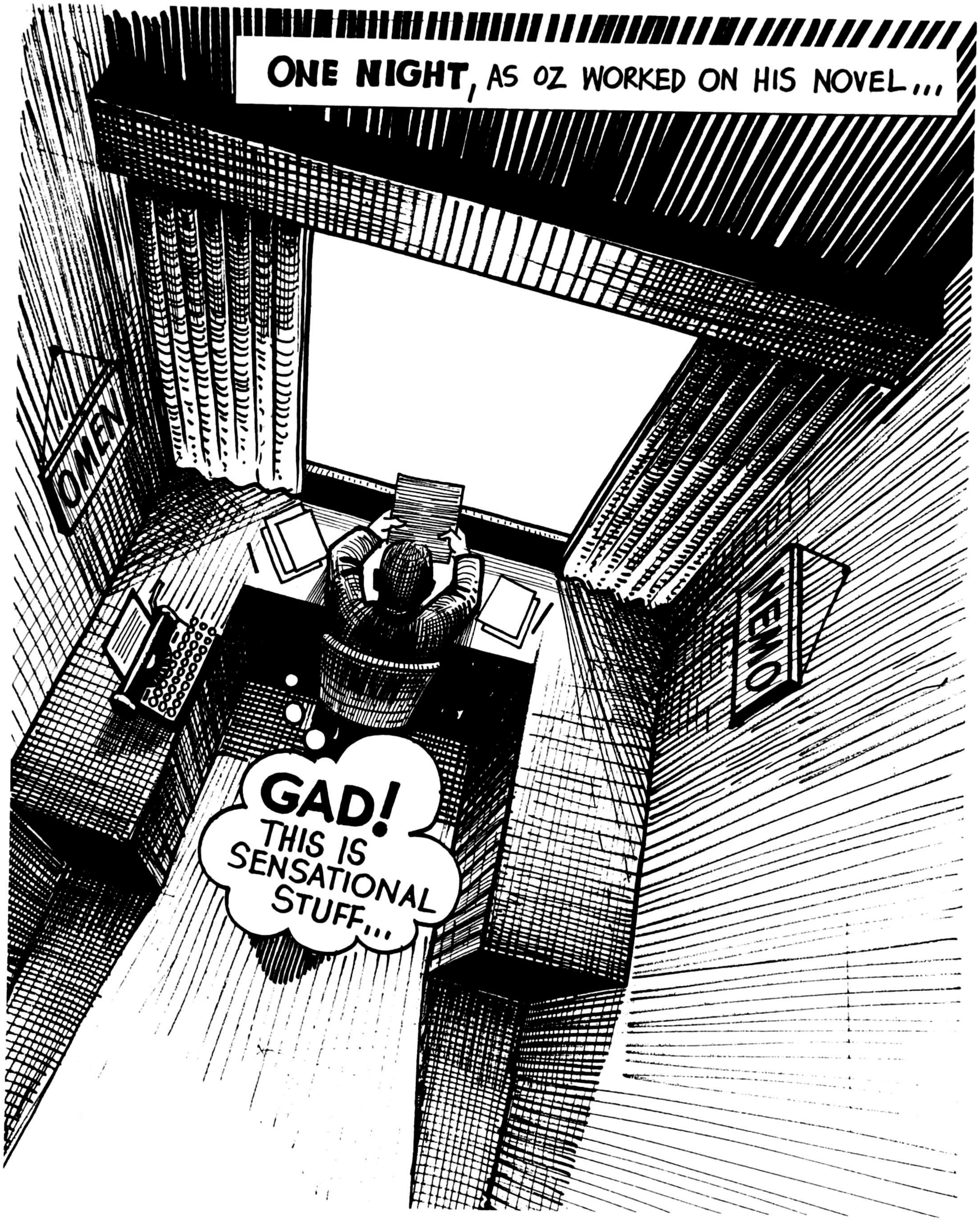
Maximiliana

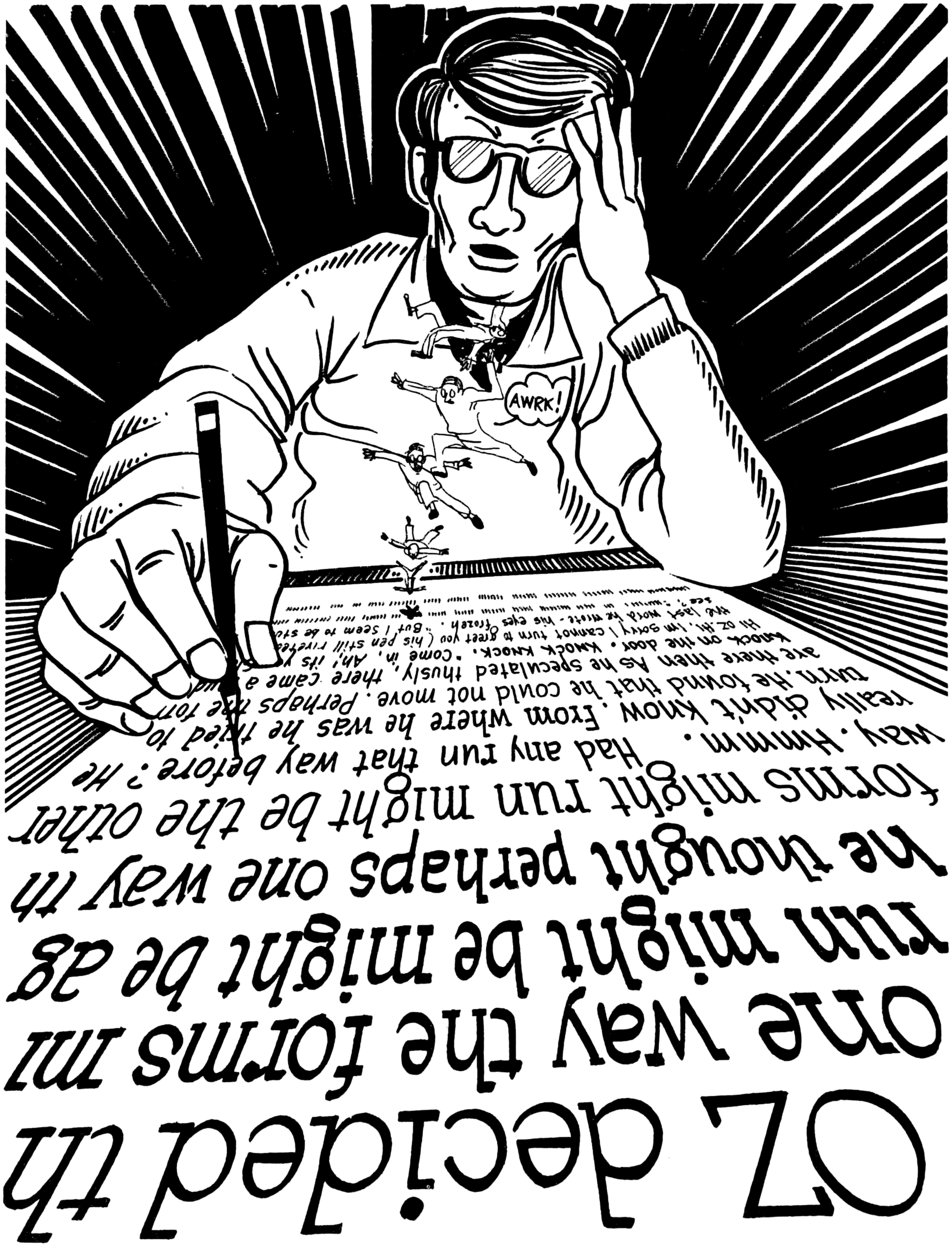
John Riddell

H

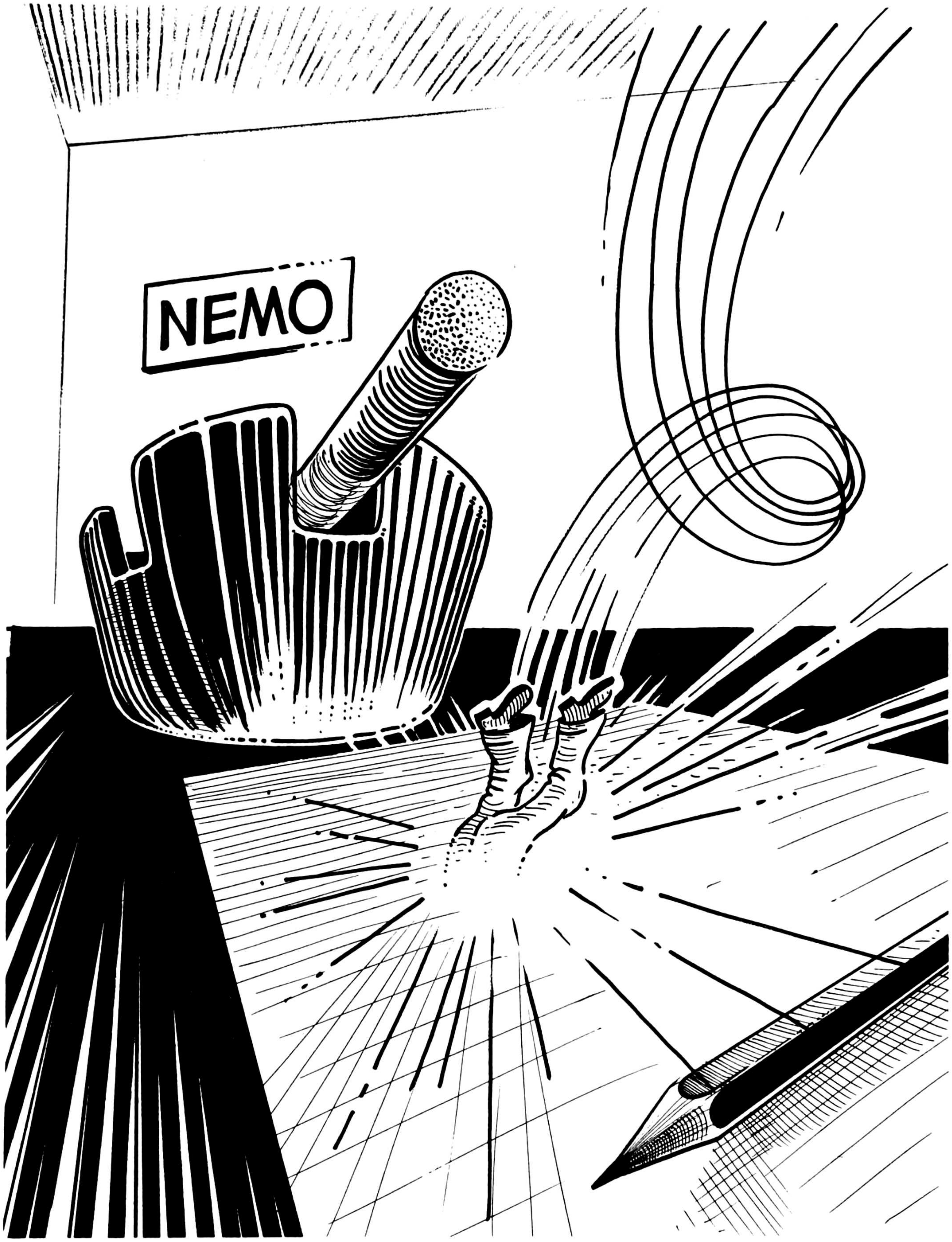


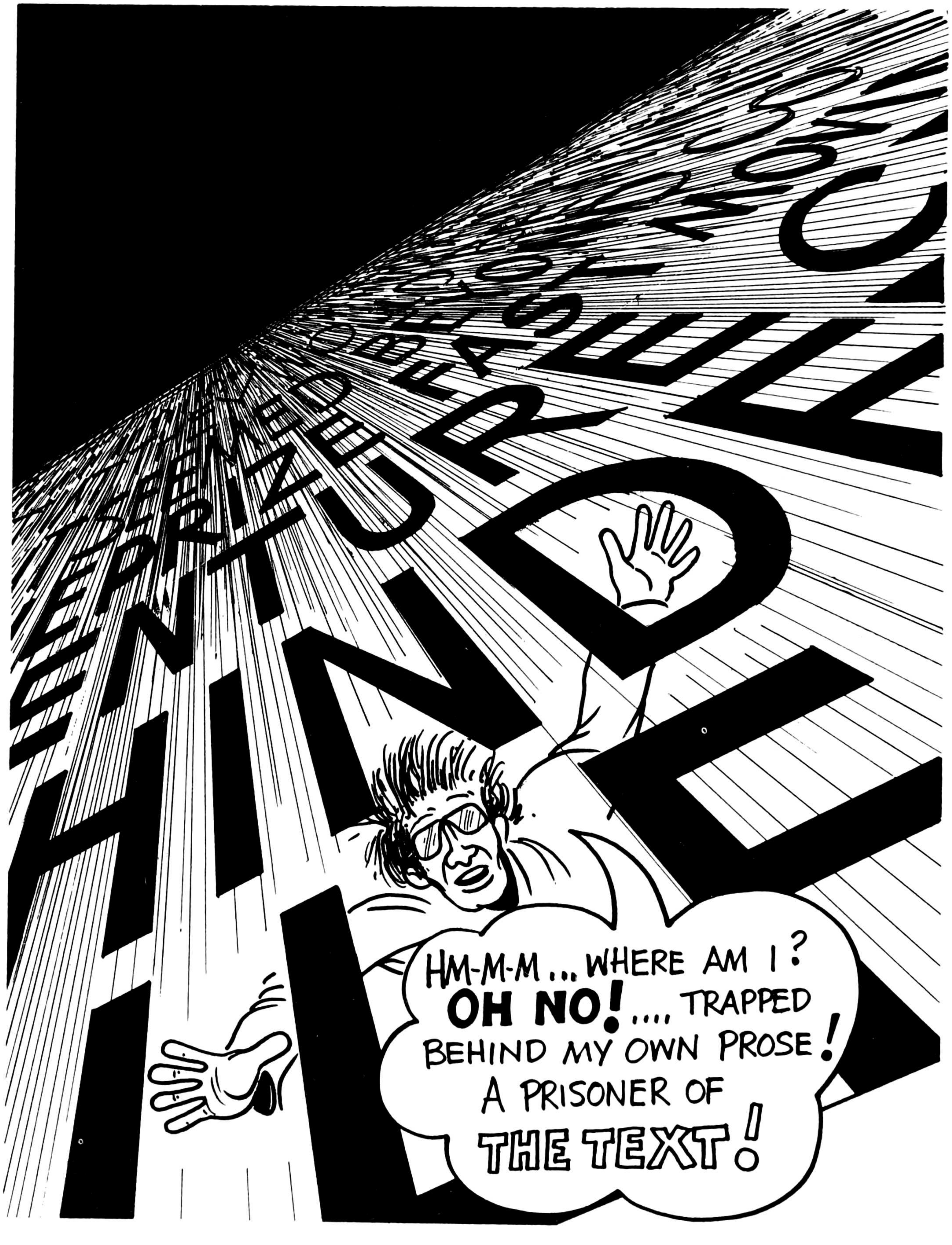
FOR Bp NICHOL ■ FINISHED ART - JOHN LIGOURE


ONE NIGHT, AS OZ WORKED ON HIS NOVEL...
OMEN
NEMO
GAD! THIS IS SENSATIONAL STUFF...

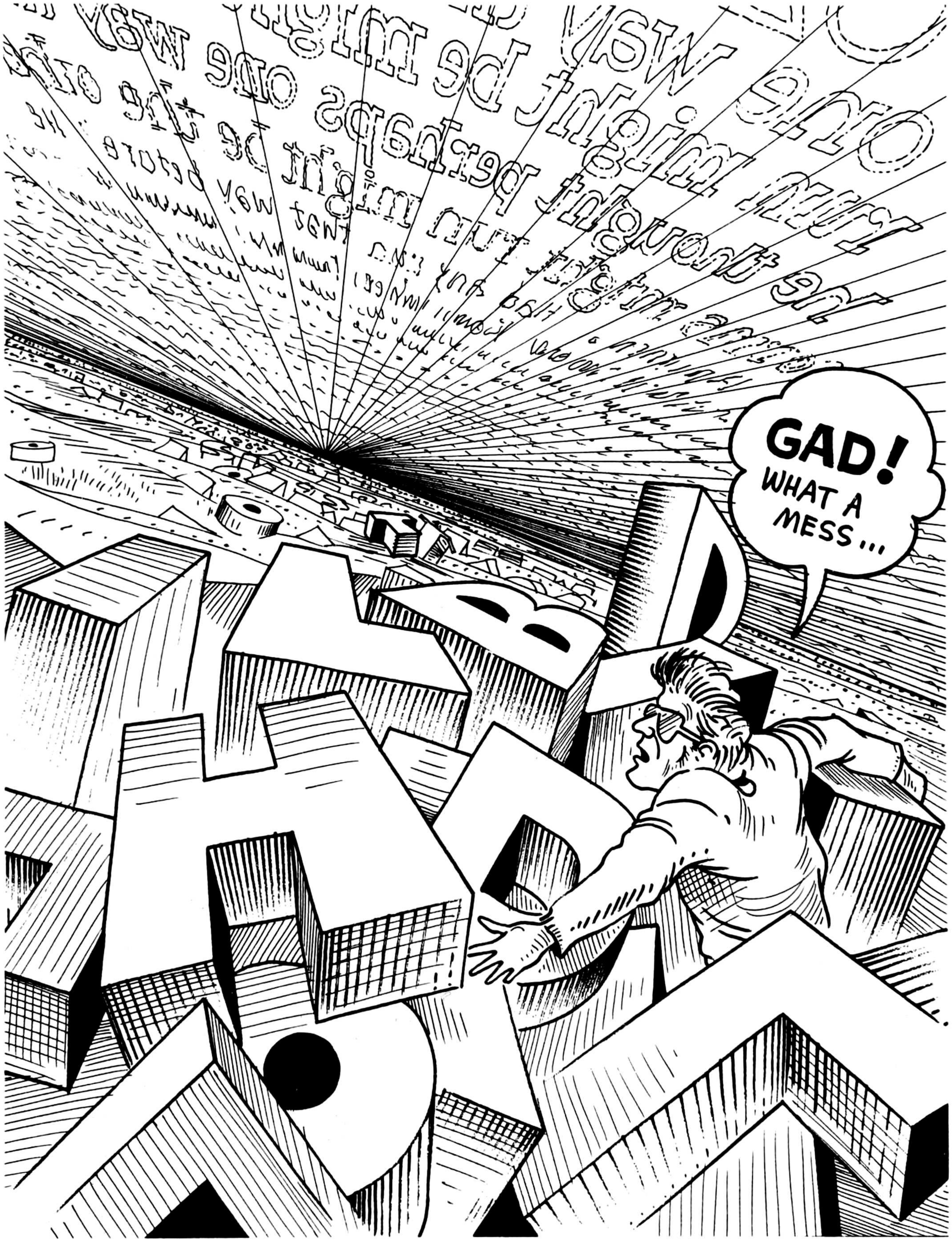

OZ decided th
one way the forms mi
run might be might be ag
he thought perhaps one way th
forms might run might be the other
way. Hmmm. Had any run that way before? He
really didn't know. From where he was he tried to
turn. He found that he could not move. Perhaps the for
are there then As he speculated thusly, there came a
knock on the door. KNOCK KNOCK. "Come in, Ah, its y
Hi OZ. Hi, Im sorry I cannot turn to greet you (his pen still riveted
the last word he wrote - his eyes frozen. "But I seem to be stu
see?
AWRK!

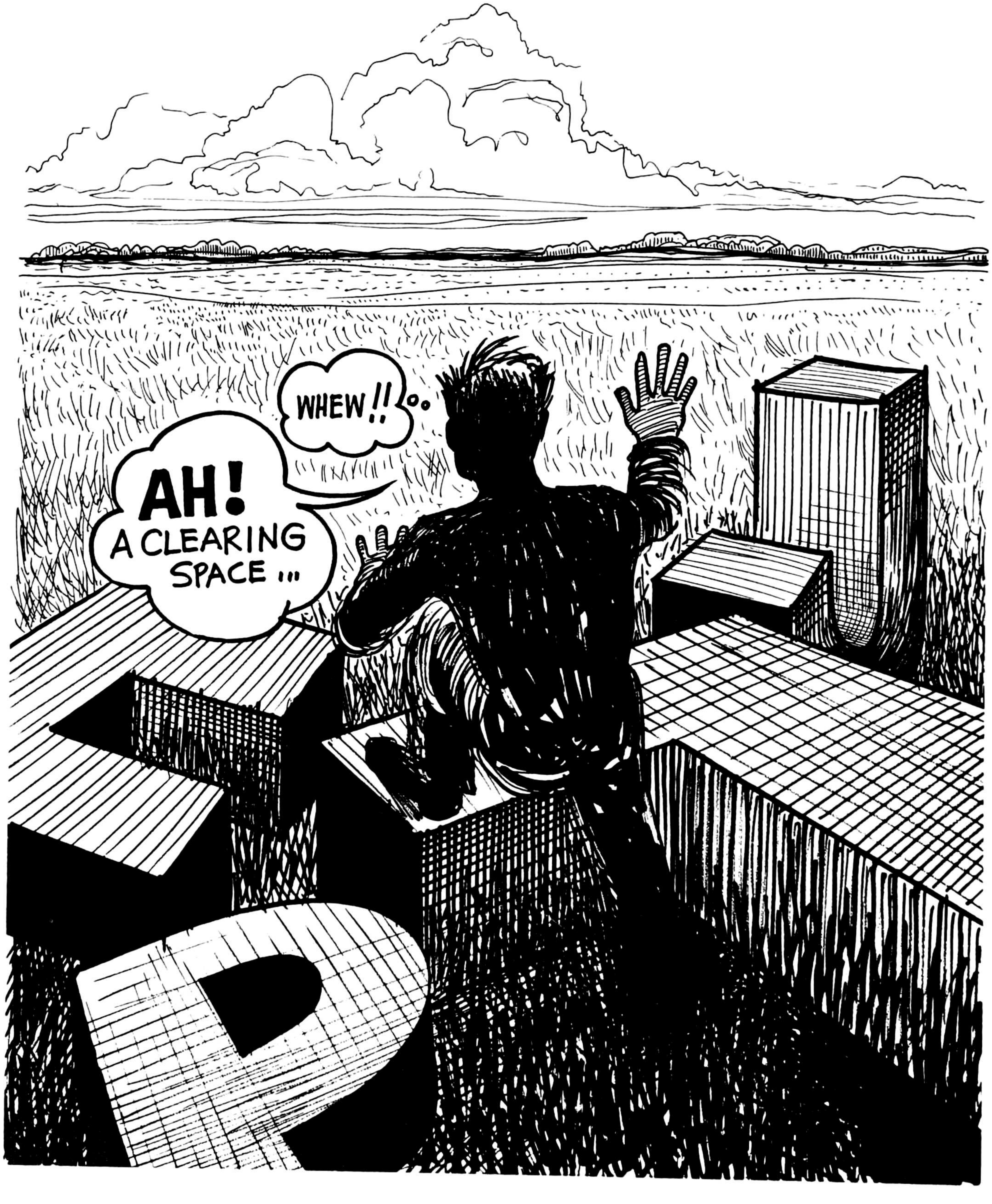
John Riddell


NEMO

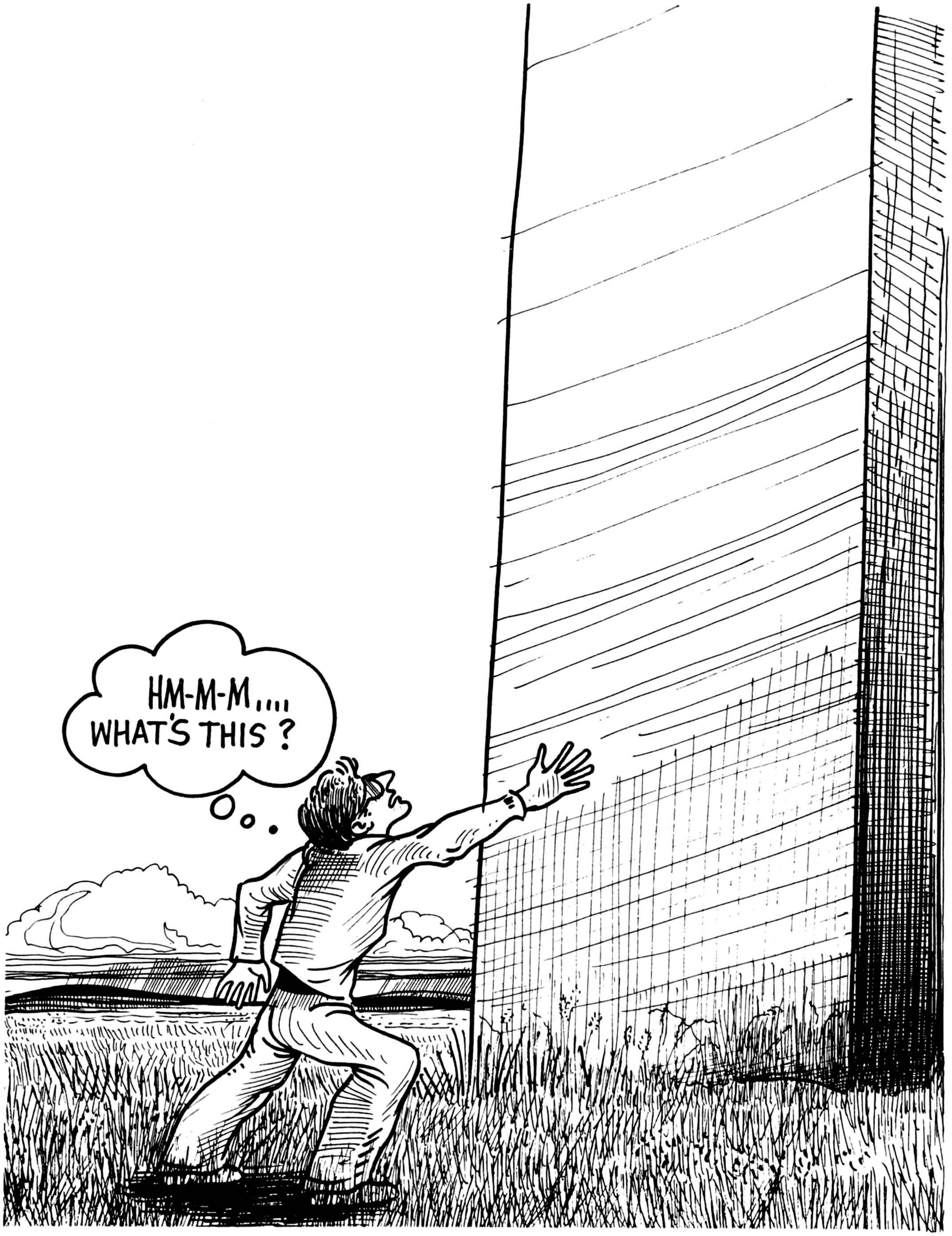

HM-M-M... WHERE AM I? OH NO!.... TRAPPED BEHIND MY OWN PROSE! A PRISONER OF THE TEXT!

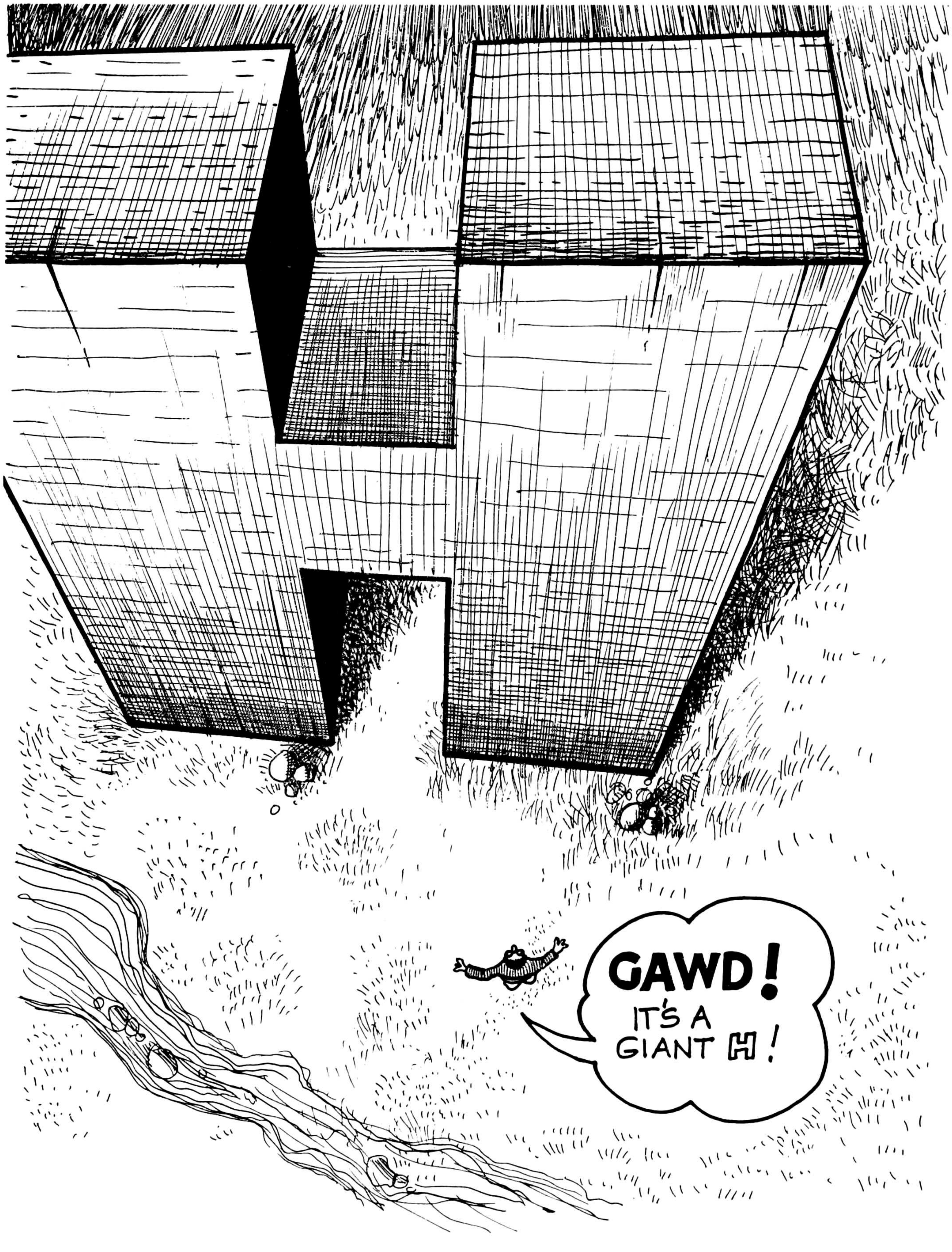
John Riddell


GAD! WHAT A MESS...

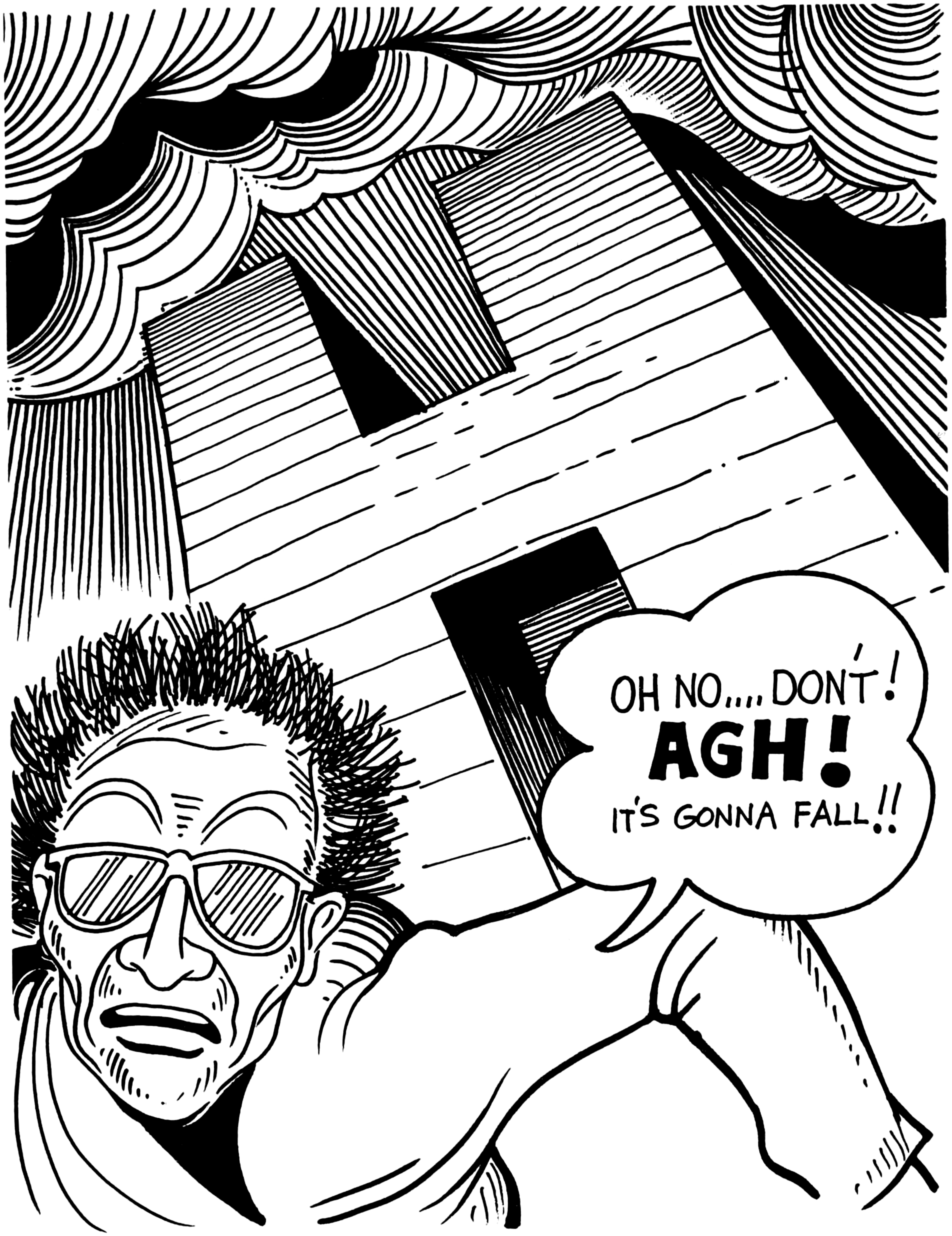

WHEW!!
AH! A CLEARING SPACE ...

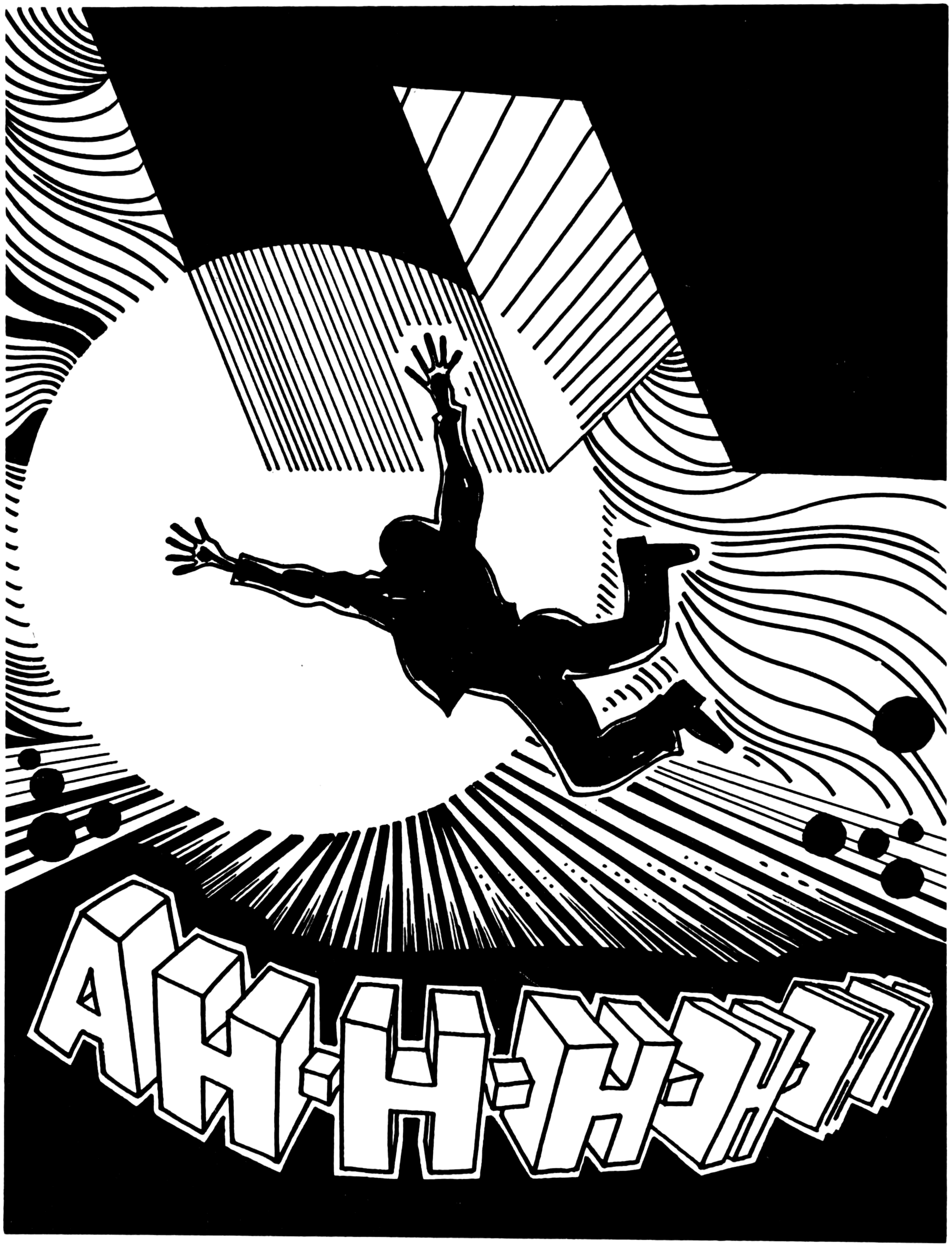
John Riddell


HM-M-M,.... WHAT'S THIS ?

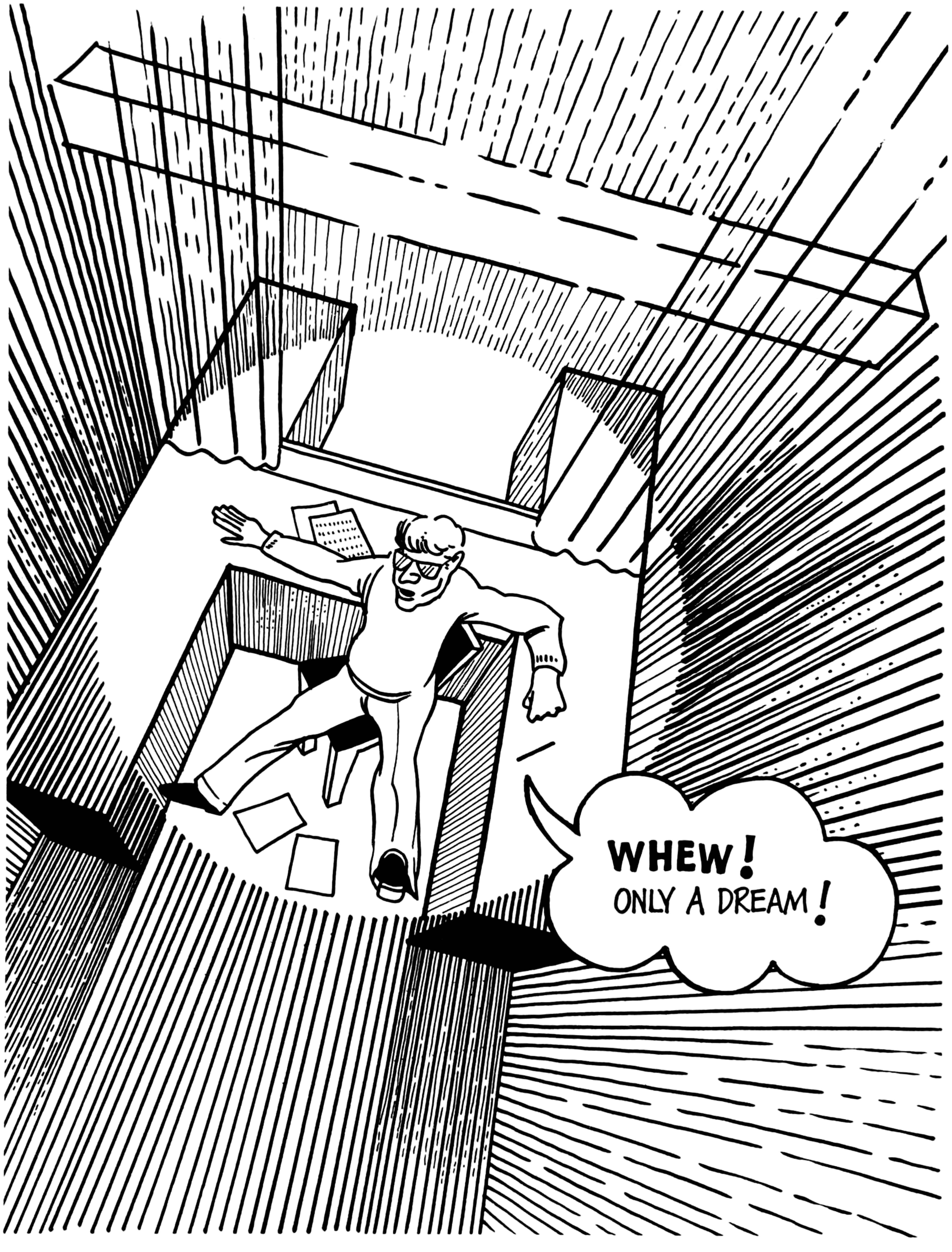

GAWD! IT'S A GIANT H!

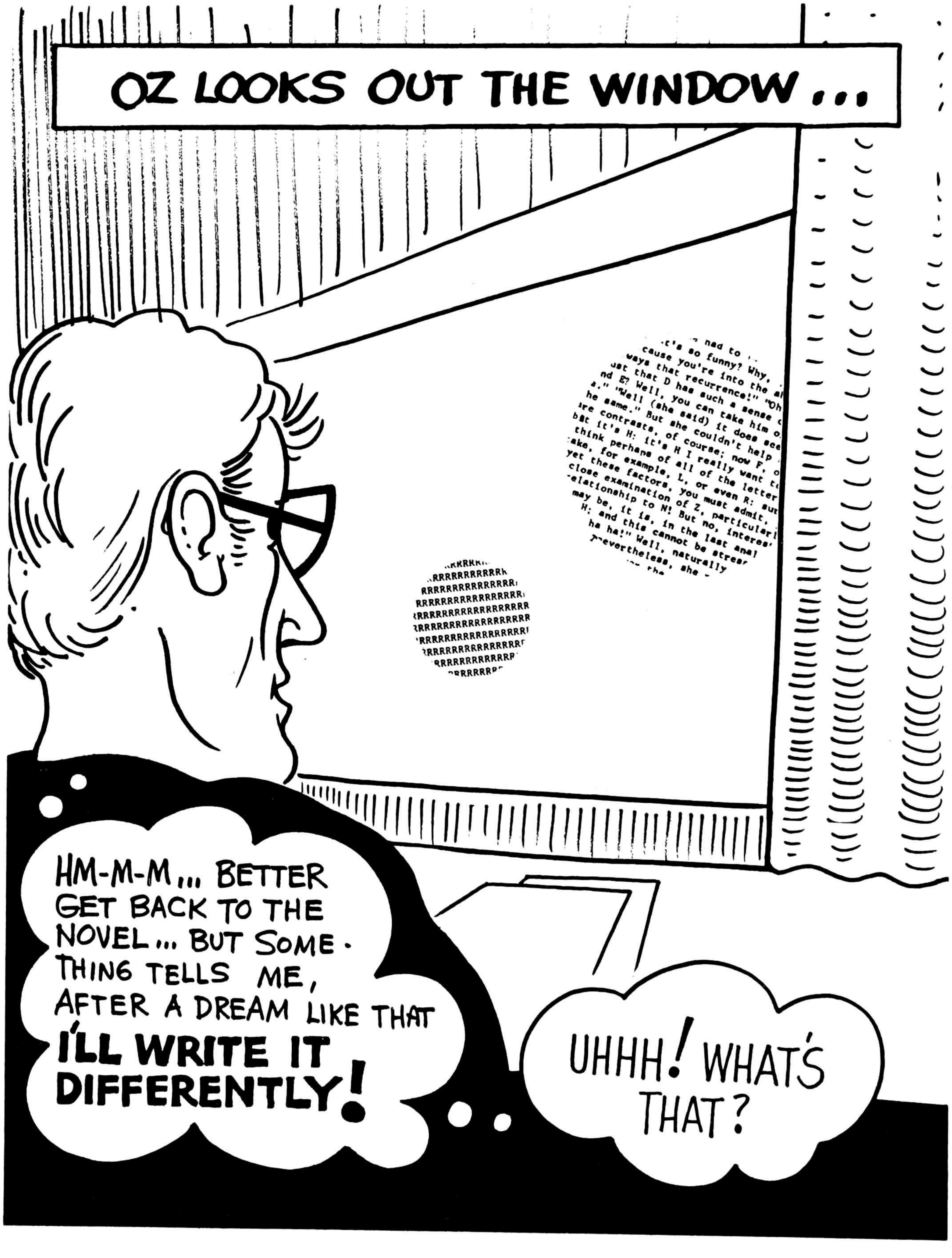
John Riddell


OH NO.... DON'T!
AGH!
IT'S GONNA FALL!!



John Riddell


WHEW! ONLY A DREAM!


OZ LOOKS OUT THE WINDOW...
.t's ' nad to ..
cause you're into the a
ways that recurrence!" "Oh
ust that D has such a sense c
nd E? Well, you can take him o
a." "Well (she said) it does see
he same." But she couldn't help
are contrasts, of course; now F, o
bat it's H: it's H I really want t
think perhans of all of the letter
ake, for example, L, or even R: sur
yet these factors, you must admit,
close examination of Z, particularl
relationship to N! But no, interes
may be, it is, in the last anal
H: and this cannot be strees
ha ha!" Well, naturally
Nevertheless, she
the
HM-M-M... BETTER GET BACK TO THE NOVEL... BUT SOME-THING TELLS ME, AFTER A DREAM LIKE THAT I'LL WRITE IT DIFFERENTLY!
UHHH! WHAT'S THAT?

O G C

nd but
you could
just then yo
only after t
ikely other
ventful

K Y C P U

RRRRRR
RRRRRRRRRR
RRRRRRRRRRRR
RRRRRRRRRRRRRR
RRRRRRRRRRRRRR
RRRRRRRRRRRRRR
RRRRRRRRRRRRR
RRRRRRRRRRRR
RRRRRRRRR
RRRRR

L Q K A W A I B J H X Q R H I J N R

KKKKKKKK
KKKKKKKKKKK
KKKKKKKKKKK
KKKKKKKKKK
KKKKKKK

G L J T E O J D V F L E N S F B S

nad to
t's so funny? Why,
cause you're into the abc
ways that recurrence!" "Oh, n
ust that D has such a sense of h
nd E? Well, you can take him or le
e." "Well (she said) it does seem an
he same." But she couldn't help smili
are contrasts, of course; now F, on th
but it's H: it's H I really want to te
think perhaps of all of the letters m
ake, for example, L, or even R: surel
yet these factors, you must admit, ju
close examination of Z, particularl
elationship to N! But no, interes
may be, it is, in the last anal
H; and this cannot be stress
ha ha!" Well, naturally
Nevertheless, she
the

H V W F b X O D L

was perha
r the stranges
d Rawlins done so.
ct that Emily couldn
n any way he might ha
e had simply replied,"
o." Yet, there were ot
he might foresee: Cla
looked out the wind
and, naturally en
ouldn't bel

O T U P

AAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAA

P Z R D K

H

R. Murray Schafer

Dicamus et Labyrinthos *is a detailed, elaborate work, part genuine philology and part pataphysical spoof. Schafer's invented Ectocretan language purportedly survives on sixty-nine tablets discovered in 1938, modeled on the circumstances surrounding the discovery by Sir Arthur Evans of two Minoan scripts (Linear A and B). Schafer presents its script and offers translations. Bearing obvious comparison with Armand Schwerner's* Tablets *in its use of an invented critical and scholarly apparatus, Schafer's philological fiction lends a historical patina to his inventive contemporary concerns. He is best known as a Canadian composer and a pioneer in the study of sonic environments or "soundscapes"; the results of this research are presented in* The Tuning of the World. *Schafer has been called the Borges of calligraphy, a prowess proven in his intricate musical notations and in the books* The Chaldean Inscription *(a calligraphic-philological permutation),* The Sixteen Scribes, Ariadne, *and* Smoke *(a hand-drawn written novel). As a young musician he was befriended by Ezra Pound in Venice, carried the manuscript of* The Cantos *to T. S. Eliot at Faber and Faber in London, and edited* Ezra Pound and Music: The Complete Criticism.

BAD ARGUMENT, MY FRIEND,
A REED STYLUS ON CLAY
COULD BE SWIFT—

Feb. 22. Imagine writing in ancient times with heavy instruments & coarse materials. 'What labour'! How long to chip a single message? And with the material, so with the thought. By escaping stone, thought gained lightness (Innis). The Minoans must have shared in this liberation, and Pliny says (if we can believe him) that they wrote on palm leaves. Ventris assumed that "the shapes of the Linear A & B signs suggest that they were not designed primarily for scratching on clay but for writing in ink on skins or papyrus."

N.H. XIII, 69

D.M.G p.109

But the documents which survive are all on clay. The Magia Tribia tablets, like those from Pylos, were dried (not baked) and like them were filed away in boxes of gypsum or in wicker baskets, secured with cords and sealed with prismatic lumps of clay, impressed with seal stones. They were then stacked and stored in special storage vaults. Access to documents must have been limited by these elaborate sealings and docketings so that one imagines consulting the texts accompanied by great cere

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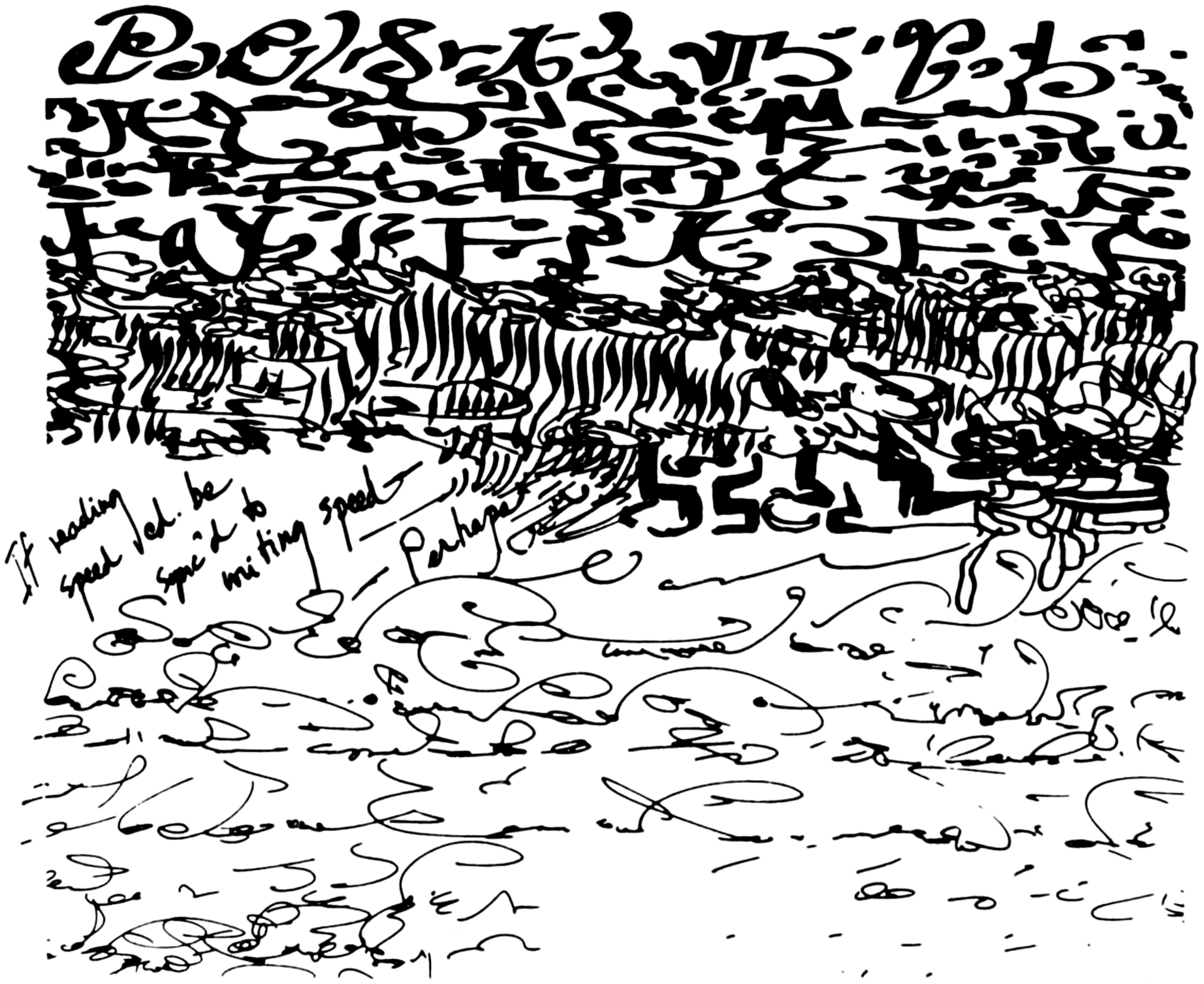
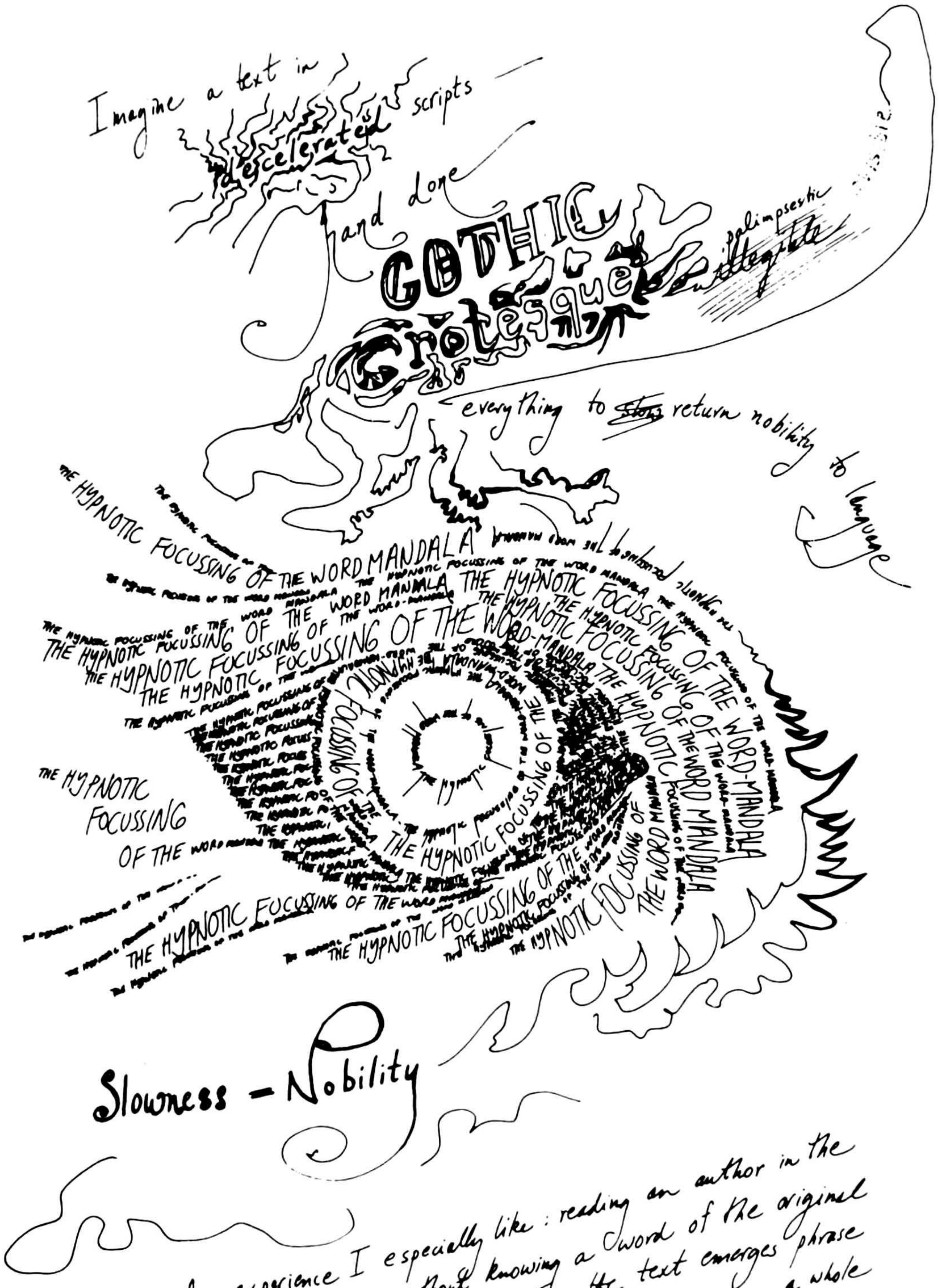
"NOBILITY: SLOWNESS IN ALL THINGS - ALSO THE SLOW GLANCE" – Nietzsche

---

Those old texts could never have been read quickly - never faster than the voice could speak them and probably a good deal slower. The slow voice (reading was always out loud) led to rhetoric. Let us say that the reading and speaking tempo were at some point in history fused into synchronization and that this was slow, conditioned by the thick letters of tablet or codex, striking the stones of vault or library like a deep rolling...

After the invention of printing all this changed. Uniform letter spacing increased reading speed. And the book found a different acoustic setting when it could be carried outdoors, or on journeys, or into restaurants. The reader (in embarrassment) became silent and the reading habit visual. People then read faster than they spoke. We could describe this increased tempo by a Mach number. Mach equals the ratio of the speed of an object passing through a medium to the speed of sound in the medium. Mach gives an index by which reading speed can be measured. I, for example, read good fiction at Mach 1, cheap fiction (when I can't avoid it) upwards of Mach 3 and the newspaper (scanning) at some incalculable Mach number.


If reading speed sh. be equ'd to writing speed — Perhaps


THE HYPNOTIC FOCUSSING OF THE WORD MANDALA
THE HYPNOTIC FOCUSSING OF THE WORD-MANDALA

Imagine a text in decelerated scripts —

and done GOTHIC Grotesque palimpsestic illegible

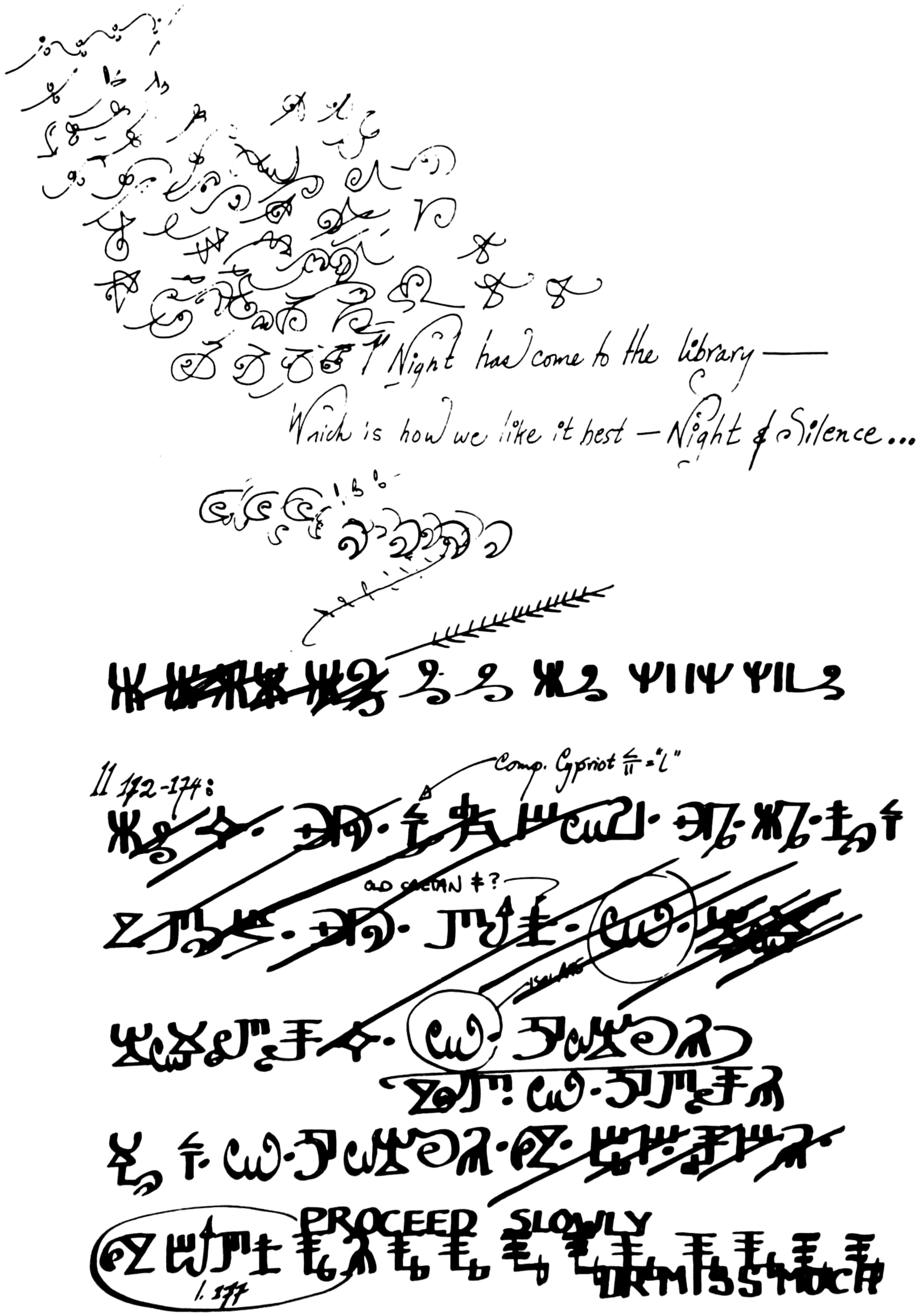
everything to ~~stop~~ return nobility to language

Slowness – Nobility

An experience I especially like: reading an author in the original without knowing a word of the original language, so that as the text emerges phrase by phrase from the dictionary, a whole culture is learned in the process

But in this case even the dictionary remains to be invented. — —

From *Dicamus et Labyrinthos: A Philologist's Notebook*


Night has come to the library —
Which is how we like it best — Night of Silence...
ll 172-174:
Comp. Cypriot ⫨ = "l"
OLD CRETAN ǂ?
ISOLATE
PROCEED SLOWLY
OR MISS MUCH
l. 177

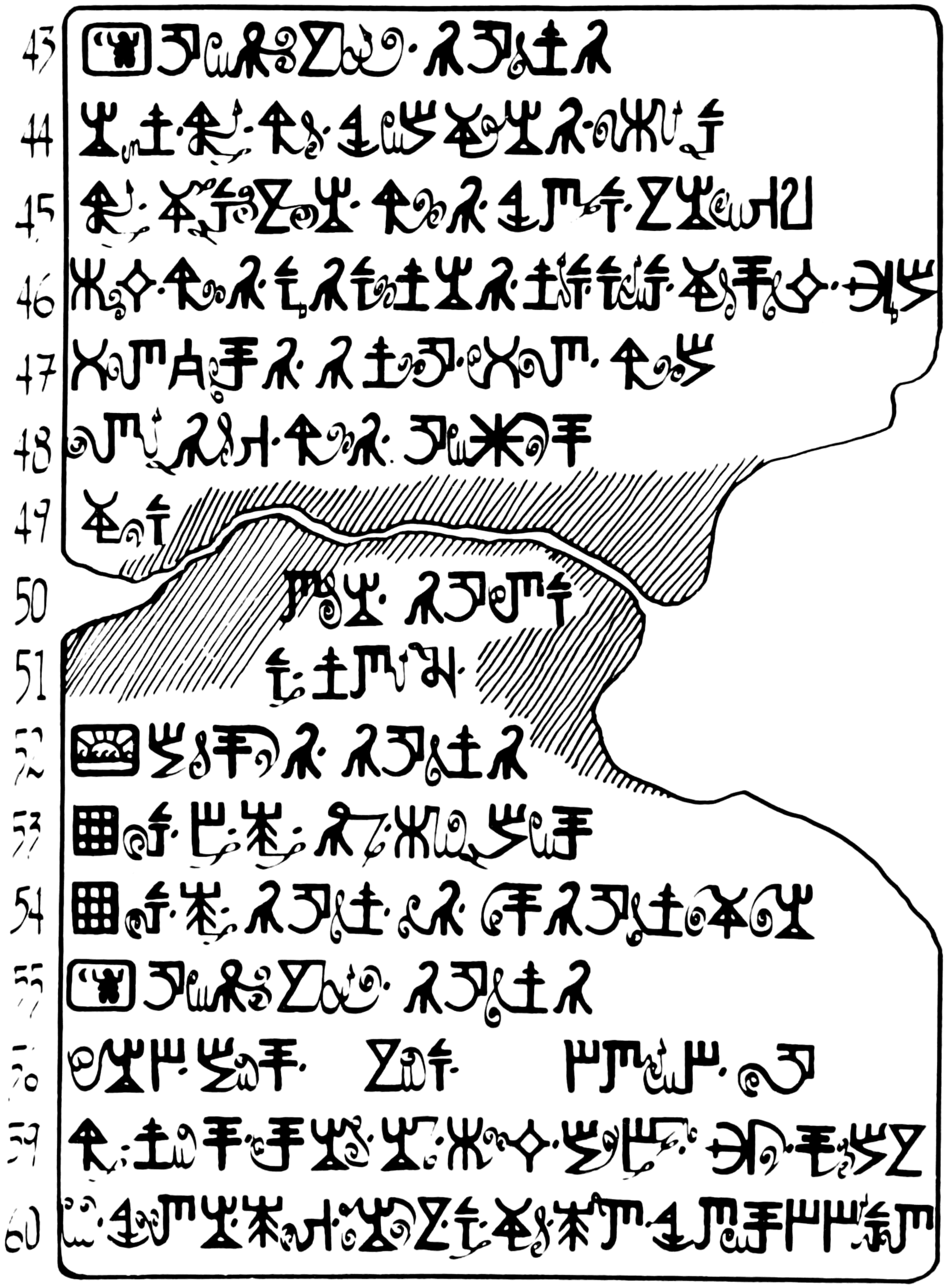
The Cretan labyrinth was not the only one in history. The Egyptians had one also and it was older, having been constructed by Amenemhat III of the XIIth Dynasty who reigned about 2300 B.C. "I have seen it," says Herodotus (History Book II, 148) "and no words can tell its wonders..." Even the pyramids did not impress him as much. According to Herodotus the labyrinth consisted of "twelve courts – six in a row facing north, six south – the gates of the one range exactly fronting the gates of the other, with a continuous wall round the outside of the whole. Inside, the building is of two storeys and contains three thousand rooms, of which half are underground, and the other half directly above them." Herodotus was allowed to pass through the upper rooms only, the lower being guarded from visitors, as they contained the tombs of kings and of the sacred crocodiles. Of the upper storey he writes "it is hard to believe that they are the work of men; the baffling and intricate passages from room to room & from court to court were an endless wonder to me." The structure was similarly described by the geographer and traveller Strabo, and also by Diodorus the Sicilian and by Pomponius Mela. Pliny, who lived in the first century of the Christian era, also saw it. He describes the subterranean storey as being reached by "flights of ninety steps leading down from the porticoes" and containing "porphyritic columns, figures of gods and hideous monsters, and statues of kings." Some of the courts are so made that the opening of a door makes a terrifying sound as of thunder. Most of the buildings are in total darkness.

After this, accounts of the Egyptian labyrinth grow nebulous. By the time reliable visitors began again to visit the site in the eighteenth century, the labyrinth had all but vanished. There was even some doubt as to where it had been positioned. When the site was excavated by Flinders Petrie in 1888, it yielded up little of value, although its position was located, just south of the pyramid of Hawara, in which the mummified remains of King Amenemhat III were discovered. From the beds of stone chips Petrie was also able to estimate the labyrinth's size as about three hundred and twenty-five meters by two hundred and fifty meters.

The labyrinth emerges from decorative art. We find it almost from the beginning of history in the tectonic and syntactic ornament of patterned pottery. Concerning the meander motif in Egyptian & Minoan art Evans noted that "the squaring of spiraliform designs [is] a process which has often taken place in decorative art under textile influence." The thread is therefore no intruder in the labyrinth, but is the device that both introduces its plan & leads its solution. Fabric is a maze "solved" by thread. A million stitches back & forth, holding us in the dazzling experiment of twill or satin weave. And at the head of the thread, guiding it & being guided by it, the needle. Theseus is that straightness; he is the arrow's flight, the needle's pierce. But to Ariadne belongs the devious stitchery by which the design is fashioned. The needle & the thread – the inventors of ART.

From *Dicamus et Labyrinthos: A Philologist's Notebook*

TABLET FIVE


43
44
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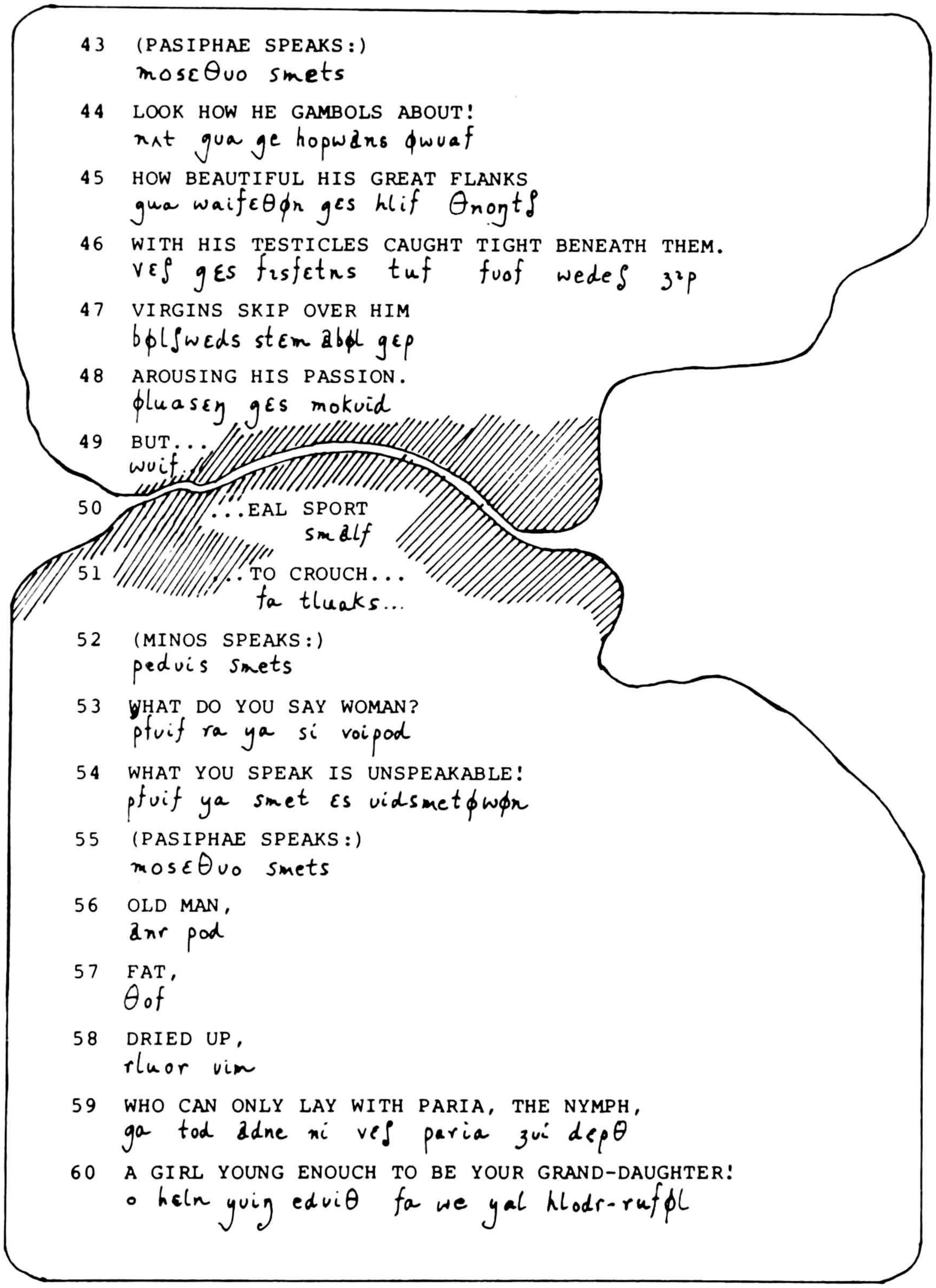
58
59
60

Tablet Five



43 (PASIPHAE SPEAKS:)
mosεθuo smets

44 LOOK HOW HE GAMBOLS ABOUT!
nʌt gua ge hopwđns ϕwuaf

45 HOW BEAUTIFUL HIS GREAT FLANKS
gua waifεθϕn gεs hlif θnoŋtʃ

46 WITH HIS TESTICLES CAUGHT TIGHT BENEATH THEM.
vεʃ gεs tɪsfεtns tuf fuof wedeʃ ʒɪp

47 VIRGINS SKIP OVER HIM
bϕlʃwεds stεm đbϕl gεp

48 AROUSING HIS PASSION.
ϕluasεŋ gεs mokuid

49 BUT...
wuif...

50 ...EAL SPORT
smđlf

51 ...TO CROUCH...
fa tluaks...

52 (MINOS SPEAKS:)
peduis smets

53 WHAT DO YOU SAY WOMAN?
pfuif ra ya si voipod

54 WHAT YOU SPEAK IS UNSPEAKABLE!
pfuif ya smet εs uidsmetϕwϕn

55 (PASIPHAE SPEAKS:)
mosεθuo smets

56 OLD MAN,
đnr pod

57 FAT,
θof

58 DRIED UP,
rluor vim

59 WHO CAN ONLY LAY WITH PARIA, THE NYMPH,
ga tod đdne ni veʃ paria ʒui depθ

60 A GIRL YOUNG ENOUCH TO BE YOUR GRAND-DAUGHTER!
o heln yuiŋ eduiθ fa we yal hlodr-rufϕl

From *Dicamus et Labyrinthos: A Philologist's Notebook*

Armand Schwerner

Tablet XI

whenever I was open I was closed*

*who is speaking here?

where? when you took them with him?
she opened her vagina so late it was no prophecy it was . . . . +
whenever I opened your vagina*

*who is the narrator?

she was a prophecy no later drainage could make up for
and never mind the vats of fresh (urus-shit?)*

*clearly an allusion to unusably new fertilizer; a
potential scorching of the soil?

where did you take her when the vats . . . .
+ +
for the bloody wisent for the [spermy] (frogs?)*

*who is speaking here?

lots of people opened that door
splayed on the butchering dust I opened my thighs
where? when you took them with him?
the island flowers the swamp flowers*

*might this be an initial allusion to the Good Land?

she took him with them for her
where? . . . . with him for it?

she opened her + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + and never minded
she took him splayed from them to cover it*

*singular confusion of pronouns here. I do not know who I am when I read this. How magnificent.

pressed down to raaling goruck juice by copper vats by prophecy
when you took them with him
as they were shown through the entrance she whinied like the auroch
where I . . . . and she reared
in every case they . . . .
when we . . . . all together . . . . ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕
o and a life a life a life a life a life a life a life
a life a life a life a life a life a life a life a life a life a life a life
punctured by valleys, never even, punctured by punctures
punctured and punctured and what's left is fingernail
unburied, dangerous above ground, rotting slowly pintrpnit!
in the shadow of [fingernail] we (I?) + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + +
+ + + + + + + + + + + + + + lianregnif fo wodahs eht ni
stav gnimaets ekil serutcnup fo wodahs eht ni
suru rof efil a efil a efil a efil a efil a dna o*

*apparent sudden appearance for the first time in these texts of the boustrophedon! reminiscent of the Lemnos Stela of course—but how much later *that* was; this one may be the *first* boustrophedon!

and cry with the force of testicles aw-aw-nib-gi-gi*

*this verbal, 'o answering answerer,' operates in the hortatory vocative imperative, an idiosyncratic tense, apparently a mood, but most clearly a real case. Cognates in later Semitic (as for instance Square Arabic) assure us that the term represents intonationally nothing less than a scream of despair, released at high pitch after the solemn incantation of three low notes, in our notation perhaps C below the bar lines in the treble clef. Specifics are hard here. Interestingly the scream leads into the magic barter list, itself maybe a cover for intermittently forbidden Utopian speculations.

+ +
+ +
+ +
+ +
+ +
+ . . . .
. . . . . . but if you do, give 17 washingstones for 1 cylinder seal in exchange
give a beginning (hair?) in exchange for a wood zag-sal* **

*zag-sal: an eleven string—1½ octave—harp

**apparently the start of a barter ritual. . . . a wig for an instrument here?

give a mountain-size platter in exchange for a horde of our people
give a risen millet stalk, give a giant rye in exchange for a hunger-servant
give a healthy lettuce and a drinking-tube in exchange for . . . . *

*according to Saggs, the lettuce was, and still is, responsible 'for the transmission of a great deal of water-borne disease.'

give fresh yoghurt in exchange for a horde of our people
+ + + + + + + + + + + + + + + ...
give a great netting of fish in exchange for a hunger-servant
give a milking-stool and a calf in exchange for a thin wormy thigh-bone
give a bone spoon and another bone spoon and another in exchange for a + + + + + +*

*the phrase 'in exchange for' shows every possibility of also meaning 'for the benefit of,' a meaning readily discoverable in the sub-dialects of silversmiths and lyre-players.

give a drainage system for the miserable without pattern (shoes?)*

*we know that only government buildings in the archaic context had drainage systems. So this line is of transcendent importance. In it we finally meet, unequivocally, the direct thrust of the first socialist voice in recorded human history. The single voice cries out in early compassion. Who can now easily doubt that the formula 'in exchange for' served as a mask for the writer's anti-hierarchial intent? No contemporary of mine can conceive of the genius and will necessary for one man to break through the almost total thought-control of the archaic hierarchies.

+ + + + + + + + + + + + lianregnif fo wodahs eht ni
stav gnimaets ekil serutcnup fo wodahs eht ni
nam rof efil a efil a efil a efil a efil a dna*

*boustrophedon again; for all its hope and spiritual valor, we are in this twentieth century at an end. It is a mere 5,000 years since, and the story near over.

George Dalgarno

Parable of the Blind Homer and the Deaf Aesop

That a Deaf man may be taught to speak, is no more a doubt to me, then that a Blind man may be taught to write.

. . . I will premise. 1. That to read and write is a commendation in a servant. 2. It recommends him the more, if he be to serve a blind Master. And 3. if his blind Master be a man of much business or learning, this enhanses his service yet the more. These things premised; let our case be this.

Blind *Homer* hearing of an ingenious, but Deaf slave, called *Æſop,* who was trained up in all the forementioned waies of Sematology, and he himself being expert in Dactylology, he resolved to purchase *Æſop* at any rate. The first service he puts him upon, was to write out his *Ilias* fair, from his own blotted Copy: And because *Æſop* could scarce read his hand, he was always present himself, correcting the faults of his Pen, upon his fingers. And here I leave them for a while till I have resolved another material doubt:

That which is my main design in this Treatise (to teach, how to come to understand a language by reading and writing) suggests to me here to resolve this question. How a blind person might communicate with a dumb? The cause of doubting being upon the dumb mans part. I answer. The defect of his Tongue must be supplied with a musical Instrument, having the letters equally distinguished upon the Keys, or Strings, both to the Eye of the Dumb, and in the sounds to the Ear of the Blind; which I take for granted, might produce the same effects with Oral speech. And here it is observable that that same action would very properly be, both Writing and Speaking; writing from the hand of the dumb touching the Keys, or Strings; speaking to the Ears of the Blind man from the sound of the Instrument.

After this short enterlude, let us bring *Homer* and *Æſop* upon the stage again. The old man was mightily pleased with *Æſop,* till unfortunately on a certain time, the stuttering of his Tongue gave *Homer* occasion to suspect him of a ly: for which, in a sudden passion, he cuts out his Tongue: But afterwards repenting what he had done, resolved not to put him away; for he considered that he was yet as capable of serving him as ever; and perhaps more, the other waies of interpretation that he was skilled in, being more distinct than Glossology could be in a Deaf man. It happened soon after that *Homer* had invited some friends to dinner, commanding *Æſop* to provide the greatest rarities the Market did afford. *Æſop* made a show of great preparation; but set nothing upon the Table, beside the tip of his own Tongue, in a large dish; upbraiding his Master with his pipe, that he did not tear his blotted papers when he could not read them; but had patience till he himself corrected them upon his fingers. *Homer* not enduring this affront before strangers throws *Æſops* pype in the fire. *Æſop* fearing worse to follow, throws himself at his Masters feet taking him by the hand, and by the rules of Haptology begs his pardon, promising if he would have patience, to make amends for his fault. *Homer* startled at this, to find both a Tongue, and a Pype, in *Æſops* fingers; was transported from wrath to fear, and admiration, concluding for certain, That *Æſop* was a conjurer, and that he deserved to be thrown in the fire after his pype. Yet resolving once more to try his wit and honesty: and for making satisfaction to his friends who had lost their dinner, he invites them to return tomorrow, charging *Æſop* to provide the oldest, and leanest carrion, he could find. The night following, *Æſop* serves his blind Master with *lex talionis* tongue for tongue, and repeated the same dinner to his friends the next day; excusing the matter, that he had from first to last obeyed his Masters commands, to the best of his judgment. *Homer* taking it ill, to be so often outwitted by a slave, by Dactylology begs of his provoked friends, to revenge him upon *Æſop*, by plucking out his Eyes; that his condition might not be more comfortable than his own. After this old age and a fit of sickness deprived *Homer* of his Hearing. This reconciled him again to *Æſop;* for he judged him the fittest companion he could find, with whom to bemoan his folly, and misery. After this, they lived good friends, passing the time in telling old stories; some times upon their fingers ends, and sometimes with hand in hand, traversing the Alphabetical *Ilias*.

This *Drama* being acted according to the Rules of Art, if there be any certainty in Art, that the promised effects will follow, is no less true than it seems to be strange. And from this we may learn two things. 1. That tho hearing and seeing be the Principal, yet are they not the only Senses of Knowledg. 2. That the Hand is, (or at least is capable of being made) a more serviceable organ of interpretation to the Soul than the tongue. For it has access to its Mistress's presence, by the door of 3 Senses. 1. Of hearing by Aulology. 2. Of seeing, by both Species of Schematology, to wit, Typology and Dactylology. 3. Of Feeling, by Haptology. Whereas the Tongue can only enter by the door of one Sense, and do its message only by one kind of interpretation, Glossology.

Madeline Gins

Arakawa's Line in Helen Keller's Signature

"These are among the most realistic paintings I've never seen."
—Helen Keller

"When 'always and not' signifies something, 'the signified or if' belongs to the zero set. Have we met before?"
—Arakawa

Courbet's Canvas (1971–72).

"Forget any non-gray" was heard. *First we are told to forget gray, then it is non-gray we are told to forget. I am so confused. I'd like to forget the whole thing.* What's not graphical (visually and kinaesthetically), pictorial, and optical about taking the reaction to a work, in this particular instance someone's having been irritated by it, and putting that in the middle of what that work is or has become? Could there be diagrams for simply everything? Although these diagrams are less encumbered than other paintings, they are no less ample, I've been told.

The entire body was perception, and all perception was action. The infant, in chimp fashion, is reaching for and grabbing onto with one hand the horizontal bar of a swing. The infant grabs the bar and clings to it so tightly that nothing can separate one from the other. Bar and hand become as if one . . . and *the entire body was perception* . . . a perception felt to be, even as it was totally on the move, solidly fixed in place. Only with an infant's agreement could the hand be pried loose; and otherwise, the infant might hang onto the bar indefinitely. This is a proven capability of infants that adults obviously lose. The infant's arm and all paths to it, the torso, the legs, and its entire body, in fact, become compressed versions of themselves, narrowly channeling a pluripotentiality of perceiving into a ferocious attachment at touch. The forming order at perceiving texture before that has gone on to weave the look of the world—that is this. A group of lines and squares unclench proportionate divisions of the canvas at bottom right. Everything situationally prepares for the move. Arrow moves out its own materiality; it curves up askance. The ice-cold burning of compressed perception has gone to grain and back. Beneath untitled lies a pressed-down skeleton of a memory, schema, that is, of "having made the move" as well as of "to be about to move." Going beneath untitled, and noting that, leads to the return of the proper name.

Beneath Untitled (1986).

"Lines make it possible for me to move forward and back, away from and towards—is that a picture plane?"

"Which lines do what? Be specific."

"A natural affinity exists between perceiving and anything that even resembles a line. That perceiving occurs consecutively or sequentially gives it an air of linearity."

"I know I should want to agree with you, but. . . . Why place so much emphasis on line?"

"The line lies there in its abstract concreteness."

"Pertinent questions would be:

"What is it to abstract?"

"What has been abstracted thus far?"

"What is the limit case of "to abstract"?

"An abstractology then?"

"Every act of abstraction begins with the infant's act in *the entire body was perception* mode."

"Line in and of itself is animated cartoon. Any solidifying beyond line tends to slow down the motion rather than to add to it. Any further painting in makes things less animate."

"Nothing but living points. Then, if, in the making of it, the line has been pinned down all along the making of it, origin after origin, that's animation enough."

The Infant's Gaze (1987–88).

"Piling on the paint only vitiates the three-dimensional or, rather, the four-dimensional immediacy of the viewer's gaze out for a walk, in *its event to wander.* Any further painting in of details interferes with the action."

"You might as well ask why so much emphasis is placed on voice. Tools of articulation are natural candidates for emphasis."

"Lines are more abstract than voices."

"But dots are more concrete than words."

"How can you say that?!"

"Dot is to line as word is to sentence. Will you, first of all, grant me that?"

"Granted. Putting one word after another makes a sentence, just as adding dot or point after dot or point makes a line."

"And grasping a dot is more like grasping a word than it is like grasping a line, just as grasping a line would seem to have more in common with grasping a sentence than with grasping a dot."

"Let's go back to how concrete dots are."

"'Watching the wagon as it grew smaller and smaller until it was only a dot on the horizon' or 'islands show as mere dots on the ocean.'"

"I think, if you don't mind, I'm ready to join in now."

"Try to present a distinctly third view of it all, will you."

"The wagon as a dot . . . at that moment it becomes a dot, what's that?"

"That's as abstract or as concrete as it was when regular wagon-size, only smaller, with fewer (actually, only one) noticeable parts."

"Dots can stand for things. And this dot would seem to stand for wagon at the same time that it *is* the thing it stands for?"

"I grasp at straws. I grasp at straws of distance, of the distance, and I come up with a dot that still is the wagon."

"A mere shift of focus and the wagon-dot's gone. A dot at the actual-virtual nexus."

"The enveloping continues even once what was being enveloped is gone. Hear this without noting my having said it."

"But. But it has particle-status (albeit all wave) within the line of sight, therefore the verdict must be: concrete."

"Are you saying dots are more concrete than words, because words involve more construing?"

"That's it."

"What of the three dots we saw separate themselves from an airplane over the desert. As we watched the dots descend, two of them became larger, more irregular forms, becoming, in a matter of seconds, for us, what they, in fact, were: parachutes. But one sadly and unbelievably with a soundless thud of air never became anything but a dot. We saw a dot crash or rather appear to touch down softly at the horizon, and we knew this, in our bones, as they say, not only to represent but to be the death of someone."

"That was a dot that could have benefited from some artificial respiration, for example, if you could have gotten to it soon enough."

"An agony of writhing over and through a dot."

"You didn't want us to be so much in agreement about all this. You put it that we should each be reaching for and grabbing at the sense we are after even as Little Miss or Little Mister *Entirely Perception* grabs at, then onto, the bar."

"But even the most violent disagreements comprise more agreement than not."

"Come off it."

"That's a nice try at sounding the negative note. But think of it: no disagreement could ever match in extent the commitment each opponent in an argument makes to be in the same world with the one with whom s/he argues. In every case, a great deal more about the combatants can be seen to be in accord than not to be."

"The infant on, at, with, and at one with the bar—concrete or abstract?"

"Both at once?" Three assenting nods. Two nods I see before me, and one I know I have in me. "To be entirely perception going about being entirely perception—which is what it seems to me that was—certainly concrete, certainly abstract."

"Let's consider *Walking or Talking (A Study of Twins)*, for a moment, to bring the scale of grabbing for something back down to dot."

"Why have us be there?"

"Part of what a dot is is where it's placed."

"But that's true of anything."

"It may be more true of dot."

"Dots do not exceed their (our) grasp."

"Dot: the thing of a place. Dot: a bit of placeness."

"I swear my thigh and the dot marked, 'thigh' on the canvas somehow maintain related places that manage always to correspond."

"These works have no other purpose than to locate this locating. They're not charts for anything but that."

"To give the feel of locating within thinking, and as part of thinking. Each marking locates a position relative to all the rest in the thinking field. Matching point to point means finding comparable minimal domains."

Only a blind man could have realized the great communicative power of a raised dot or point. Louis Braille's finger could always attend to several raised dots at once. Ever since then, and presumably in some way before, as well, the blind person's finger has a greater number of tactile-kinaesthetic foci than does the sighted person's."

"And how would the blind go about picking up the line?"

"Take all edges as lines."

"Who once saw will see lines once more and who never saw will see what for line?"

"A consecutiveness of effort?"

"Holding tight onto the bar, squeeze and force it down into a line."

"Go from shower curtain rod to graphite line."

"As in that thought experiment that . . ."

"Thought experiments are always in fact perceptual experiments. And these are played out along primarily, to begin with, kinaesthetic lines."

"Try this: Your eyes are closed. You're reaching out to grab a graphite line as if you were that infant intent on the bar. You must find something that is the proper size for handling this. Pick up the line and hold onto it without making use of anything as oversized for this action as your hand would be."

"Nevermind the details, the surprising thing is that I feel the doing of this all over my body."

"So do I. The thinner and finer the target of an action is, the larger the portion of body that's needed to envelop it, paradoxically enough—don't you find?"

"Again and again, and perhaps always but covertly, *the entire body was perception.*"

"You seem determined to get that tense to be back there."

"To be a stickler for positioning may be the only way to survive this world."

"Is that why you invented the term, *'movinged',* too?"

"That has always been the reason for whatever I've painted."

"Part of all action is abstract to us."

"Instinctual and coming at us obliquely. Ways of acting that come along with the organism without any why or wherefore."

"I am in numerous ways abstract to myself."

"If I am of one gender I expect to be poked and, if I am of the other, to do the poking, with some room left for reversals."

"Nothing is more abstract than I or 'I'."

"I can't even be sure how much perceiving is involved in conceiving—except, I nearly know."

Line can be used as a means to draw vision both right in towards itself and away from it.

"I'm reminded of your signature, Helen."

"The wind of my perceiving (it's yours!)—why it's passing both in front of and behind your name as you've written it—the lines are that sharp as to stand out from the surface they mark."

"The defining springboard of edge takes up its position sitting above where it sits, don't you find?"

"Your line can be seen as a twin of his. The same number of fresh breezes to each . . . and each full of holes though closed."

He pointed out that no matter which way the signature was turned, and even when it was put to be seen standing on its side, it always had the same look to it. It had a miraculously unchanging profile:

Helen Keller

"In the sentence, 'I am here' the word 'here' should be considered shorthand for the assertion, 'I am perceiving,' or, for the still shorter, 'perceiving (underway),' and be read as 'I am perceiving (underway).' Similarly, each of the other words in this sentence, the words 'I' and 'am,' can also be taken as asserting, 'perceiving (underway),' leading us to: Perceiving (underway) perceiving (underway) perceiving (underway).

Part Three

Lost and Found in Translation

Transpositions

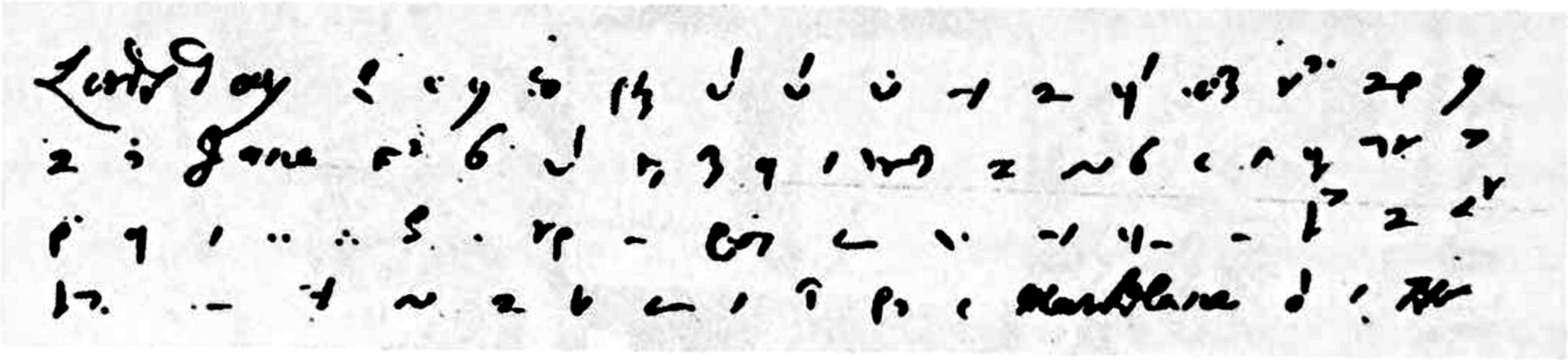
Language bears a reliable profile of the repeated and the constant but offers too a contrary pull toward variety, novelty, and transgression. The very ability to actively transpose seems to presuppose an agile system of combinatory units. While transposition appears to be a given in any combinatory system (not only language), the transpositives need not be limited to a singular domain. Transposition can involve a complication within interiorities, superimpositions, or laminations that transform discrete semiosis into a dual, multiple, and even parasitic relation.

The word parasite *in French has three meanings: a social parasite, a biological one, and audible static or noise. We will add to this list a language parasite, a linguistic microbe or infection that occupies the transit of signification. Think of the signifier nonlinguistically as a host, the unpaid landlord of that insinuative tenant, the signified. In this state the signified might be described not by the Saussurean algorithm of referential dependency but as a parasitical surplus. In Swift's and Sheridan's Anglo-Latin writings, those fibriles of ludic translation found among their correspondence (and in Swift's litteralial writing too), a written word or phrase in English carries a sonic echo of a "parasitic" Latin phrase. Michel Serres's schema of the parasite is useful in describing the relationship of a written host text to its acoustic parasite. Swift's deviant product finds subsequent application (wittingly or no) in Zukofsky's Catullus translations and David Melnick's* Men in Aïda *(in "Method," p. 284 below). In each there is a discrepant registration of the sign's physicality. A parasitic supplement insinuates and makes its presence felt. We do not detect in these works an operating dichotomy of speech and writing but rather a conspiratorial fuzziness between the two, a confluence of phoneme and grapheme in the interplay of a graphic "surface" and a heard "sense."*

Some of the most remarkable confluences of taxonomy, reason, aggression, and imagination occur within the various universal language schemes of the seventeenth century. The underlying dream of a return to global linguistic concord is a natural consequence of the myth of Babel. Central to the book of Revelation is the tenet that the true word is unilingual as well as universal. Difference linked to confusion leads to anti-Christ and anti-logos. (It is this antilogy, of course, that Finnegans Wake *both celebrates and exemplifies.) The emergence of a universal language is inseparable from the desire for unilinguality to harbor philosophic truth. This Pauline ideology is already present in the chorus of classical Greek tragedy. Like the "kiddusha" in John's revelation, the chorus presents a collective unity of speech destined to become a paradigmatic goal of the seventeenth-century universal language schemes.*[1] *But in addition to these philosophical desires, the ideal of a universal language carried both anthropological, evangelical, and ideological investments from its outset. As early as the* Ars Magna *of Ramon Llull (1232–1316) we find the desire for a universal language linked to Christian conquest.*

Llull's evangelical and ethnocentric sanction persists as late as Wilkins's proposals for a philosophical language: "Besides the most obvious advantage which would ensue, of facilitating mutual Commerce, *amongst the several Nations of the World, and the improving of all* Natural Knowledge; *it would likewise very much conduce to the spreading of the knowledge of Religion." For Dalgarno, too, a language of real characters is most useful for "civilising barbarous Nations, Propagating the Gospel, and encreasing Traffique and Commerce." Unilinguality is envisioned precisely as an instrument of conversion. Ironically, the paradigm for many of these "real" characters was the hieroglyphic sign, native to the very peoples the Europeans were trying to convert and subjugate. In the seventeenth-century apocalyptic backdrop to both national and linguistic heterogeneity, Babylon functions as the figurative condensation of whore, city, and tower. "History ends and the New Jerusalem begins when the forces of the Logos annihilate the multiplicity of tongues, when the Word can reverse the fall by restoring the prelapsarian linguistic unity that existed before Babel." The Logos shares with spelling reform and universal language schemes the messianic goal of eliminating multiplicity and difference.*

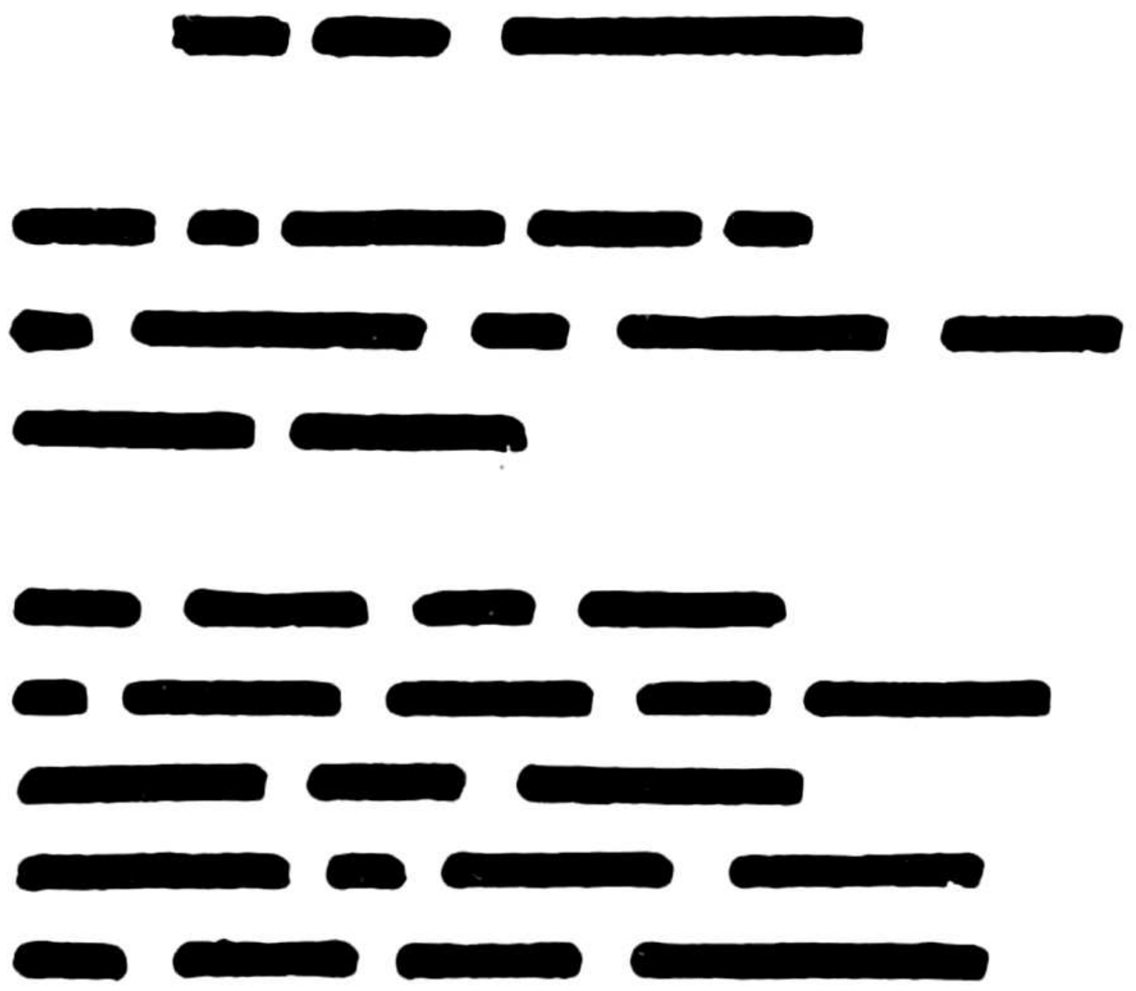
From alphabetic substitutions to John Wilkin's transposition of geometric figures onto a page for cryptographic purposes in Mercury, *there is a common subjection of textual surface to deviant inscriptions that tacitly relies on the transparency of the medium. In adapting Thomas Shelton's system of shorthand to record his diary entries, Samuel Pepys had the double motivation of practicality (the relative speed of inscription) and secrecy (the impenetrability of the signs to the uninitiated), as this brief sample indicates:*



Cryptography is predicated upon the human ability to invent a language and reflects the allure of convention narrowed down beyond a sociolect to a secret language of the cadre. But the purpose of this narrowing is not prophylactic. Rather the system is predicated on a semantic theft, or capture. A disposable text poses as primary but in reality exists to be discarded. Cryptographic diagrams and texts appear to the uninitiated as incomprehensible scripts—surface gibberish, like sound poetry on the page—but yield a covert message numerically determined according to a code known to the addressee.[2] *Cryptography introduces in a clandestine manner a materialist dimension to the normative idealism of the text as a field of transparent signifiers. This labor of covert imprinting relates to Carlo Ginzburg's "venatic" (divinatory, conjectural, semiotic) paradigm: "behind this presumptive or divinatory paradigm we perceive what may be the oldest act in the intellectual history of the human race: the hunter squatting* *on the ground, studying the tracks of his quarry." The art of transpositions recalls the archaic detailism of the hunter, examing symptoms, clues, pictorial marks for evidence that the neutral deposit bears witness to a submerged (or subversive) semiotic order.*

Bacon's age became increasingly aware of writing as a precise material act, standardized and ideologized through pedagogical control of the orthography of lexemes and the shape of letters. From this cognizance Joseph Webbe introduces a spatio-visual method of "clausing" for analyzing periods in his edition of the Andria *of Terence (1629). John Brinsley's* Ludus Literatus *(1612) employs a columnar method of translation involving the transposition of spoken into visual units. Joshua Steele's* Prosodia Rationalis *(1775) offers a detailed visual system of notation designed to facilitate a poem's accurate, aural realization in musical form: "Steele's concept of musical form in language has been drawn out beyond its status as an analogy, to the extent that the substance, the material, of language can present us with a sphere of appreciation quite separate from its meaning—wordless music." Such visualized formats for writing as we find in Webbe, Brinsley, Steele, and Fogg induce a crisis in the enunciatory economy, for, as Martin Elsky asks, "In what sense does one speak a chart?" In our own terms, a visual parasite is installed into a textual apparatus that demands competing attention as a nonphonetic semiosis.*

In Fogg's rewriting of William Hayley, an invisible parasite is made manifest by removing its textual host. Fogg's "text" is a remarkable antecedent of Man Ray's famous poem of 1924 which obliterates a text by thick black lines but leaves the syntactic blank spaces intact:



Fogg's trenchant linearity becomes a literal transposition of the literal; a semantic line inducing a material, nonsemantic one. It is hard not to sense a sedimented humor in his method, and a willful punning on the poetic and literal sense of "line." For Fogg, the poem offers a kinetic excess of harmony and discontinuity, evoking in the reader a creative action of her own. "The traces of these delightful movements frequently remain in the mind, and serve as a kind of inspiration, allowing them no rest *till they have filled up the craving void of these blanks of harmony with compositions of their own." The decanted poem of Hayley becomes Locke's* tabula rasa *offered as a seductive, harmonious blank, a lure to the reader's own writerly desires. Both Steele and Fogg release a latent choreography within conventional textual phenomena, a latency that is material and concrete in a way that Lyotard's libidinal forces or Kristeva's semiotic order are not. Man Ray, Fogg, and Steele also share a common metasemiotic disposition, offering material laminations onto preexistent texts that transform them into another dimension. Most especially, all three present the luscious paradox of a silent yet visible sound, like the covert matter in Dada and Futurist sound poems. Henri Michaux offers yet another instance of verbal inclination plunging below the threshold of retrievability, emitting instead a mute spectrum of provocative blanks. "I have often followed a thought . . . a mental phrase, mute, signaled, unpronounced, as African tom-toms transmit messages without words," he writes, offering this illustrative mannequin:*

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"You can't have art without resistance in the materials." This claim by William Morris (on which Jerome McGann elaborates in Black Riders*) conjures the insurrectional status of literature as a resistant counterinstitution to any instrumental mandate. This obduracy can be figured several ways: as the destabilizing dynamics of the* clinamen *(see "Clinamen," p. 532 below), the ceaseless duplicity*

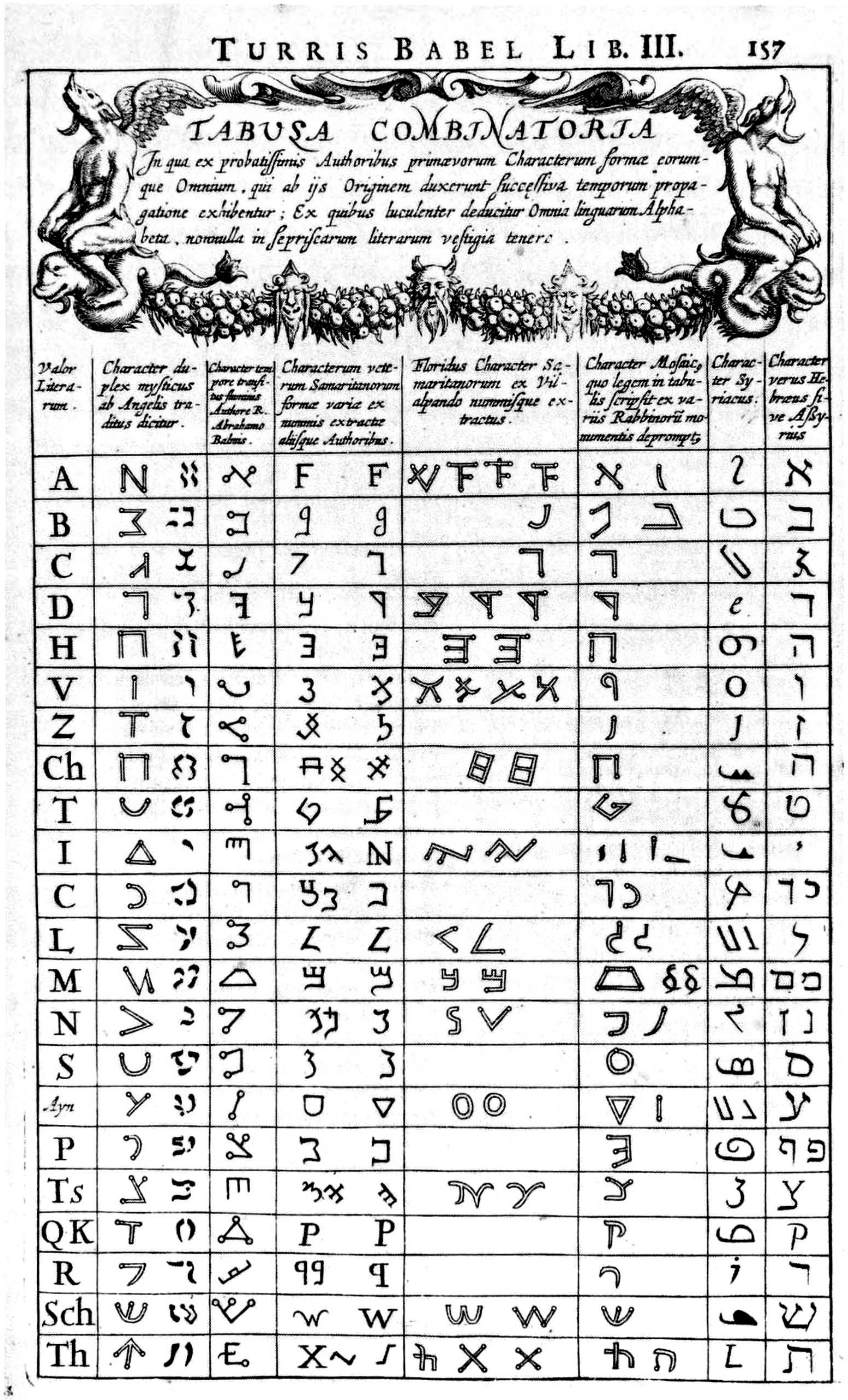
of representation in Foucault's "intangible destiny of the mirror," or as Mallarmé's impotent power which is the word. It is the opaque, the obdurate text that the following portfolio locates and revivifies. The poetic wall is without fenestration. All of the works exhibit this same resistance to the instrumental demand for a clear semantic of univocal utterance. What gains insistence is literature's single, obvious "fact": that the aural/visual is not a simple transit but a dichotomous zone of complex interaction.

The lip poetry of Ernst Jandl offers a variant perspective announced perhaps surprisingly in this confidential communiqué of Swedenborg: "I have been informed by the angels that the very first speech in every earth was speech by the face, and from the two origins there, the lips and the eyes." Jandl's poem is a profane, angelic text that isolates locution and transposes it into the performative. His text notates a return to gesture, to locution without its sound, which generates a face. "For that is exactly what the act of speech does: it distorts our face, explodes its calm, destroys its mask." This distortion is at the same time gestural expression, on which Jandl's lip poems capitalize, the texts of which are merely acrobatic, postural preludes to an incarnation. Roland Barthes provides the link, the succulent relation between this gestural expression and its truth. "That is what Masson's work tells us: for writing to be manifest in its truth (and not in its instrumentality), it must be illegible." Such illegibility finds consummate expression in Jan Svankmajer's "Tactile Poem," not presented in this anthology. Lacking the dialogic aspect of André Breton's "poem objects" (which are hybrid forms of written text and pasted objects), Svankmajer's poem replaces all verbal signs with pieces of wood, awaiting the imprint of a reader's finger, at the touch of which the natural world is restored to dactylogical braille. It is an extreme transposition of the voco-visual to the tactile, an act of reading that conflates the visual and haptic senses and surreptitiously returns language to that tactile dimension which various theorists claim as prior to speech (see the preface to "Communities," pp. 51–53 above).

By a precise grounding of his analysis of spoken language in a strict logic of physiology, Charles de Brosses obtains a similar somatic siting (see "Spelling, Saving, Spending," p. 456 below). In Helmont too there is an inextricable tangling of physiology and the written mark, sufficient to confuse the identity of the parasite. Is it a resilient carnality that has entered (and reclaimed) a graphic host? or the latter's installation in a body without writing? Johanna Drucker helps pinpoint an underlying, repressed sexual basis to these attractions to physiology. "The assumption [was] that empirical, observable natural forms, such as those of the mouth, were in themselves inherently perfect. . . . The body carried no association of carnal impurities in such systems, but was a natural fact, and therefore, could be the basis of a neutral or even positive image. The social order was not in conflict with this natural image, but a logical . . . extension of its character." When grounded in a natural relationship to their written forms, the sounds of language attain a purified carnality. However, such a relationship never obtains. The sign's inherent drive to polysemy, to parapraxis, slippage, and infection, guarantees a more or less parasitic potential for language.

1 For Swift's satire of universal language schemes in Part 3 of *Gulliver's Travels,* see our selection in "Method" (p. 253). Swift's famous satire goes on to recount another scheme "for entirely abolishing all Words whatsoever: And this was urged as a great Advantage in Point of Health as well as Brevity. . . . An Expedient was therefore offered, that since Words are only Names for *Things,* it would be more convenient for all Men to carry about them, such *Things* as were necessary to express the particular Business they are to discourse on."

2 Cardinal Richelieu is said to have used a grille cipher. The grille was constructed from any flat material (wood, metal sheet, paper), punctured with numerous apertures in various arrangements. Placed on top of a sheet of paper, the grille allowed only chosen portions to appear, and it was in these areas that the secret message was written. The grille was then removed and the rest of the sheet filled with connecting but extraneous material. To decode the embedded message an identical grille was placed over the text to isolate the hidden message. For two recent utilizations of the grille method see Tom Phillips's *A Humument* and Ronald Johnson's *Radi Os* (both in "Method," pp. 259, 276 below).



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TABULA COMBINATORIA

In qua ex probatiſſimis Authoribus primævorum Characterum formæ eorumque Omnium, qui ab ijs Originem duxerunt ſucceſſiva temporum propagatione exhibentur; Ex quibus luculenter deducitur Omnia linguarum Alphabeta, nonnulla in ſepriſcarum literarum veſtigia tenere.

Valor Literarum.
Character duplex myſticus ab Angelis traditus dicitur.
Character tempore tranſitus fluminis Authore R. Abrahamo Balmis.
Characterum veterum Samaritanorum formæ variæ ex nummis extractæ aliſque Authoribus.
Floridus Character Samaritanorum ex Vilalpando nummiſque extractus.
Character Moſaic, quo legem in tabulis ſcripſit ex varijs Rabbinorũ monumentis deprompt.
Character Syriacus.
Character verus Hebræus ſive Aſſyrius
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Th

Sir Thomas Urquhart

Regrettably, Urquhart is remembered solely for his idiosyncratic translation of Rabelais (from which we have selected passages in "Fictive Encounters," p. 158 above). This eccentric knight also made important contributions to linguistics and mathematics. Born in 1611 and educated at King's College, Aberdeen, Urquhart traveled extensively and fought for the Royalist cause during the Civil War of the 1640s. His curious work on trigonometry, Trissotetras *(1645), is memorable as much for its neologisms as for its content. A brief example from his glossary or "Lexicidion" will suffice:* "Amfractuosities, *are taken here for the cranklings, windings, turnings, and involutions belonging to the equisoleary Scheme. . . .* Cathetobasall, *is said of the Concordances of Loxogonospherical Moods, in the Datas of the Perpendicular, and the Base, for finding out of the Maine quesitum." Urquhart's scheme for a universal language was never realized, his papers all being lost at the Battle of Worcester in 1651. A sketch was published in* The Jewel, *a volume Urquhart prepared in an attempt to restore his depleted fortune; in desperation, it seems, he hoped his linguistic fantasies might prove lucrative. Penury may well account for some of the more extravagent claims Urquhart makes for his universal language, which is characterized by a vertiginous excess: eleven cases, eleven genders, and a fundamental palimpsestic form to its signification ("every word in this language signifieth as well backward as forward"). Ironically, Urquhart's short paragraphs are designated not by numeral but by that type of linguistic clumsiness his scheme was designed to overcome ("seven and fourtiethly"). For the present selection these verbal encumbrances have been removed.*

Words are the signs of things; it being to signify that they were instituted at first; nor can they be, as such, directed to any other end, whether they be articulate or inarticulate.

There ought to be a proportion betwixt the sign and thing signified; therefore should all things, whether real or rational, have their proper words assigned unto them.

Man is called a Microcosm, because he may by his conceptions and words contain within him the representatives of what in the whole world is comprehended.

A tree will be known by its leaves, a stone by its grit, a flower by the smell, meats by the taste, music by the ear, colors by the eye, the several natures of things, with their properties and essential qualities, by the intellect: and accordingly as the things are in themselves diversified, the judicious and learned men [sic] after he hath conceived them aright, sequestreth them in the several cells of their understanding each in their definite and respective places.

But in the manner of the words whereby those things are expressed, no language ever hitherto framed, hath observed any order relating to the thing signified by them: for if the words be ranked in their alphabetical series, the things represented by them will fall to be in several predicaments; and if the things themselves be categorically classed, the word whereby they are made known will not be tied to any alphabetical rule.

Besides this imperfection in all languages there is yet another, that no language upon the face of the earth hath a perfect alphabet; one lacking those letters which another hath, none having all, and all of them *in cumulo* lacking some. But that which makes the defect so much the greater, is, that these same few consonants and vowels commonly made use of, are never by two nations pronounced after the same fashion; the French A with the English being the Greek Ητα; and the Italian B with the Spanish, the Hebrew Vau.

As the alphabets are imperfect, some having but 19 letters, others 22, some 24, few exceeding that number: so do the words composed of those letters in the several languages come far short of the number of things which, to have the reputation of a perfect tongue, ought to be expressed by them.

[Urquhart then expounds the principles of his universal language designed to correct these impediments.]

There is not a word utterable by the mouth of man which in this [universal] language hath not a peculiar signification to itself. . . .

This world of words hath but two hundred and fifty prime radices, upon which all the rest are branched: for better understanding whereof, with all its dependant boughs, sprigs and ramelets, I have before my lexicon set down the division thereof (making use of another allegory) into so many cities, which are subdivided into streets, they again into lanes, those into houses, these into stories, whereof each room standeth for a word; and all these so methodically, that who observeth my precepts therein shall at the first hearing of a word know to what city it belongeth, and consequently not to be ignorant of some general signification thereof, till after a most exact prying into all its letters, finding the street, lane, house, story and room thereby denotated, he punctually hit upon the very proper thing it represents in its most specifical signification.

By virtue of adjectitious syllabicals annexible to nouns and verbs, there will arise of several words, what compound, what derivative, belonging in this language to one noun or to one verb alone, a greater number than doth pertain to all the parts of speech in the most copious language in the world besides.

So great energy to every meanest constitutive part of a word in this language is appropriated that one word thereof, though but of seven syllables at most shall comprehend that which no language else in the world is able to express in fewer than fourscore and fifteen several words; and that not only a word here and there for mastery's sake, but several millions of such; which, to any initiated in the rudiments of my grammar, shall be easy to frame.

Every word capable of number is better provided therewith in this language than any other: for instead of two or three numbers which others have, this affordeth you four; to wit, the singular, dual, plural, and redual.

In this tongue there are eleven genders; wherein likewise it exceedeth all other languages.

Verbs, mongrels, participles, and hybrids, have all of them tenses, besides the present; which number no language else is able to attain to.

Each noun thereof, or verb, may begin or end with a vowel or consonant, as to the peruser shall seem most expedient.

Every faculty, science, art, trade or discipline, requiring many words for expression of the knowledge thereof, hath each its respective root from whence all the words thereto belonging are derived.

In this language the opposite members of a division have usually the same letters in the words which signify them; the initial and final letter being all one, with a transmutation only in the middle ones.

Every word in this language signifieth as well backward as forward; and however you invert the letters, still shall you fall upon significant words: whereby a wonderful facility is obtained in making of anagrams.

As it trotteth easily with metrical feet, so at the end of the career of each line hath it the dexterity, after the manner of our English and other vernaculary tongues, to stop with the closure of a rhyme; in the framing whereof, the well-versed in that language shall have so little labour that for every word therein he shall be able to furnish at least five hundred several monosyllables of the same termination with it.

In translating verses of any vernaculary tongue, such as Italian, French, Spanish, Slavonian, Dutch, Irish, English or whatever it be, it affords you of the same signification, syllable, and in the closure of each line a rhyme, as in the original.

This language affordeth so concise words for numbering, that the number for setting down whereof would require in vulgar arithmetic more figures in a row than there might be grains of sand containable from the centre of the earth to the highest heavens, is in it expressed by two letters.

What rational logarithms do by writing, this language doth by heart; and by adding of letters, shall multiply numbers, which is a most exquisite secret.

The digits are expressed by vowels, and the consonants stand for all the results of the Cephalism, from ten to eighty one inclusively; whereby many pretty arithmetical tricks are performed.

In the denomination of the fixed stars, it affordeth the most significant way imaginary: for by the single word alone which represents the star, you shall know the magnitude, together with the longitude and latitude, both in degrees and minutes of the star that is expressed by it.

By one word in this language we shall understand what degree or what minute of the degree of a sign in the Zodiac, the sun or moon or any other planet is in.

As for the year of God, the month of that year, week of the month, day of that week, partition of the day, house of that partition, quarter and half quarter of the hour, a word of one or two syllables at most in this language will express it all to the full.

In this language also, words expressive of herbs represent unto us with what degree of cold, moisture, heat or dryness they are qualified, together with some other property distinguishing them from other herbs.

In matter of colors we shall learn by words in this language the proportion of light, shadow or darkness commixed in them.

In the composition of syllables by vowels and consonants it affordeth the aptest words that can be imagined, for expressing how many vowels and consonants any syllable is compounded of, and how placed in priority and situation to one another. Which secret in this language is exceeding necessary for understanding the vigour of derivatives in their variety of signification.

For attaining to that dexterity which Mithridates King of Pontus was said to have, in calling all his soldiers of an army of threescore thousand men by their names and surnames, this language will be so convenient that if a General, according to the rules thereof, will give new names to his soldiers, whether horse, foot, or dragoons, as the French use to do to their infantry by their *noms de guerre,* he shall be able at the first hearing of the word that represents the name of a soldier, to know of what brigade, regiment, troop, company, squadron or division he is; and whether he be of the cavalry or of the foot; a single soldier or an officer, or belonging to the Artillery or Baggage: which device, in my opinion, is not unuseful for those great Captains that would endear themselves in the favor of the soldiery.

In the contexture of nouns, pronouns, and preposital articles united together, it administreth many wonderful varieties of Laconic expressions, as in the grammar thereof shall more at large be made known unto you.

Every word in this language is significative of a number; because, as words may be increased by addition of letters and syllables; so of numbers is there a progress *in infinitum.*

In this language every number, how great soever, may be expressed by one single word.

As every number essentially differeth from one another, so shall the words expressive of several numbers be from one another distinguished.

No language but this hath in its words the whole number of letters, that is, ten vowels and five and twenty consonants; by which means there is no word escapes the latitude thereof.

As its interjections are more numerous, so are they more emphatical in their respective expression of passions than that part of speech is in any other language whatsoever.

The more syllables there be in any one word of this language, the manier several significations it hath: with which propriety no other language is endowed.

All the several genders in this language are as well competent to verbs as nouns: by virtue whereof, at the first uttering of a verb in the active voice, you shall know whether it be a god, a goddess, a man, a woman, a beast, or any thing inanimate (and so through the other five genders) that doth the action: which excellency is altogether peculiar unto this language.

In this language there is an art, out of every word of what kind of speech soever it be, to frame a verb; whereby, for expressing all manner of actions, a great facility is attained unto.

To all manner of verbs, and many syncategorematical words, is allowed in this language a flexion by cases unknown to other tongues, thereby to represent unto our understandings more compendious expressions than is possible to afford by any other means.

Of all languages this is the most compendious in complement, and consequently, fittest for courtiers and ladies.

For writing of missives, letters of State, and all other manner of epistles, whether serious or otherways, it affordeth the compactest style of any language in the world, and therefore of all other the most requisite to be learned by statesmen and merchants.

No language in matter of prayer and ejaculations to Almighty God is able for conciseness of expression to compare with it; and therefore, of all other, the most fit for the use of churchmen, and spirits inclined to devotion.

There is not a proper name in any country of the world for which this language affords not a peculiar word, without being beholding to any other. In many thousands of words belonging to this language, there is not a letter which hath not a peculiar signification by itself.

The polysyllables of this language do all of them signify by their monosyllables; which no word in any other language doth, *ex instituto,* but the compound ones: for though the syllabical parts of *exlex* separately signify as in the compound; yet those of *homo* do it not, nor yet those of *dote,* or *domus,* as in the whole: and so it is in all other languages except the same: for there are in the Italian and Latin tongues words of ten, eleven, or twelve syllables whereof not one syllable by itself doth signify anything at all in that language of what it doth in the whole; as *adolescenturiatissimamente, honorificabilitudinitatibus,* etc.

All the languages in the world will be beholding to this, and this to none.

The greatest wonder of all is that of all the languages in the world it is easiest to learn; a boy of ten years old being able to attain to the knowledge thereof in three months' space; because there are in it many facilitations for the memory, which no other language hath but it self.

For pithiness of proverbs, oracles and sentences, no language can parallel with it.

In axioms, maxims and aphorisms, it is excellent above all other languages.

For definitions, divisions and distinctions, no language is so apt.

For the affirmation, negation and infinitation of propositions, it hath properties unknown to any other language, most necessary for knowledge.

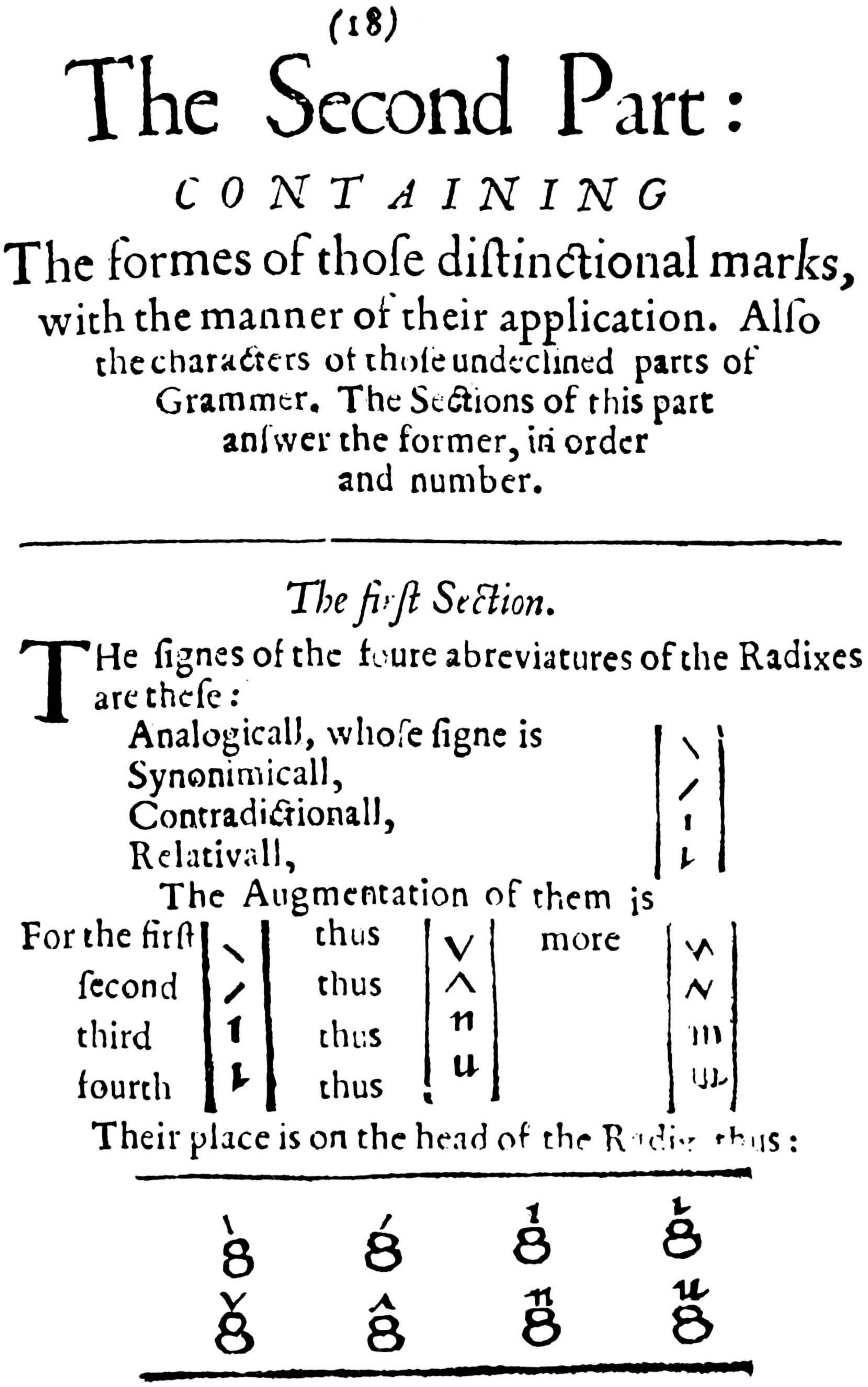
In matters of enthymemes, syllogisms, and all manner of illative ratiocination, it is the most compendious in the world.

Negative expressions are more compendiously uttered in this language, than in any other in the world.

The infinitant terms by this tongue are in one single word expressed, which succinctness is by no other language afforded.

Francis Lodwick

Lodwick (or Lodowyck) was a Dutch merchant and Protestant refugee in London, becoming a member of the Royal Society in 1681. He was associated with Samuel Hartlib, who published his two major works, A Common Writing *(1647) and* The Groundwork of a New and Perfect Language *(1652). Throughout the 1670s he was associated with Robert Hooke's circle, which discussed the forms and possibilities of a universal language. Lodwick's system utilizes three numbered indexes each containing a finite number of graphic characters. The characters themselves refer to corresponding words. By limiting his characters to a finite group of primitives expressing action from which all other characters were shown to derive (see "Clinamen," p. 560 below), Lodwick was able to maintain a relatively small number of characters. These comprise a stable radix and a wide choice of supplementary markers allowing for the expression of composite ideas. In the* Common Writing *Lodwick lists numerous augmentations to each radical: for example, the actor (drinker), the action (drinking), the object (drink), the inclination (drunkard), the abstract of the demonstrative adjective (drunkenness), and the place of action (drinking house). There is a striking similarity between the composite shapes of Lodwick's radical-augmented characters and certain Sanskrit scripts (Oriya, Negari, and Orissa).*



(18)

The Second Part:

CONTAINING

The formes of thoſe diſtinctional marks, with the manner of their application. Alſo the characters of thoſe undeclined parts of Grammer. The Sections of this part anſwer the former, in order and number.

The firſt Section.

THe ſignes of the foure abreviatures of the Radixes are theſe:

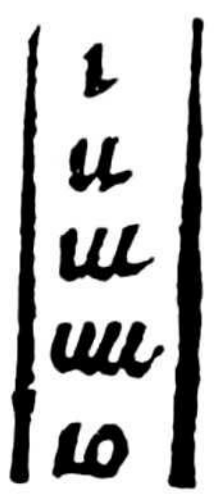
Analogicall, whoſe ſigne is	\
Synonimicall,	/
Contradictionall,	ı
Relativall,	⸤

The Augmentation of them is

For the firſt	\	thus	V	more	⩛
ſecond	/	thus	^		⩚
third	ı	thus	n		m
fourth	⸤	thus	u		w

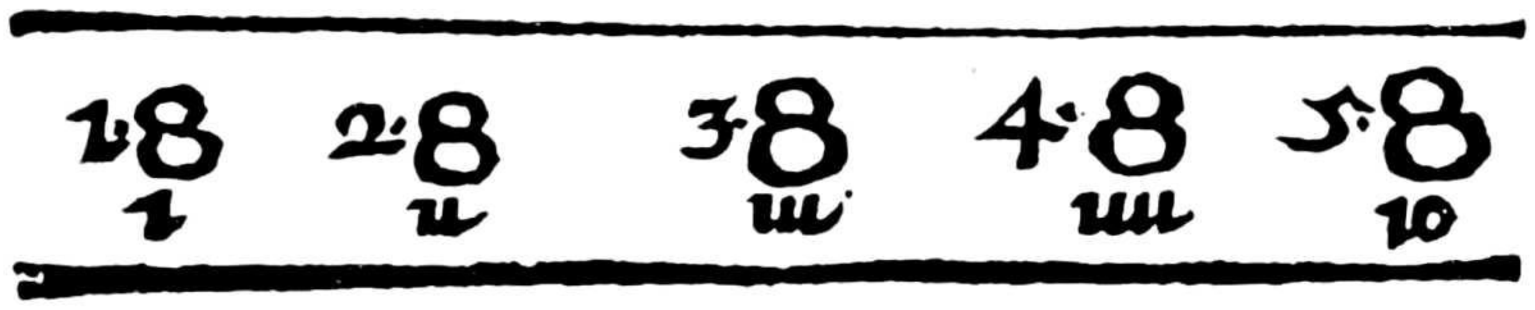
Their place is on the head of the Radix thus:

The five augmentall ſignes of the ſignifications of the Verbs, are theſe.



1. A cuſtome of the action, whoſe ſigne is
2. An Imitation.
3. An Inchoation.
4. A deſire to the action.
5. A diminution.

Their place, under the character, and as the former diſ-joyned, thus.



The 2. Section.

The ſpecificall diſtinction for the paſive ſignification, is a prick in the body of the Radix, thus:

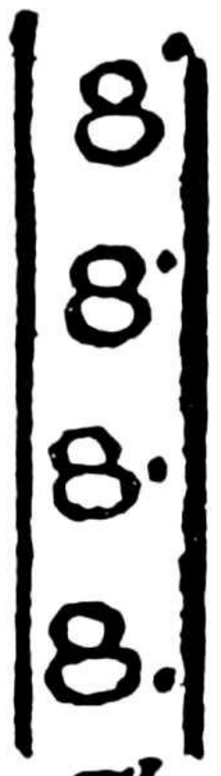
(8) to make. (8) to be made.

The 3. Section.

Nothing to Characterize.

The 4. Section.

The diſtinction of the foure Tenſes, is this. (•) thus varied in the place.



For the imperfect tenſe, thus.

perfect tenſe, thus.

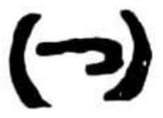
pluſperfect tenſe, thus.

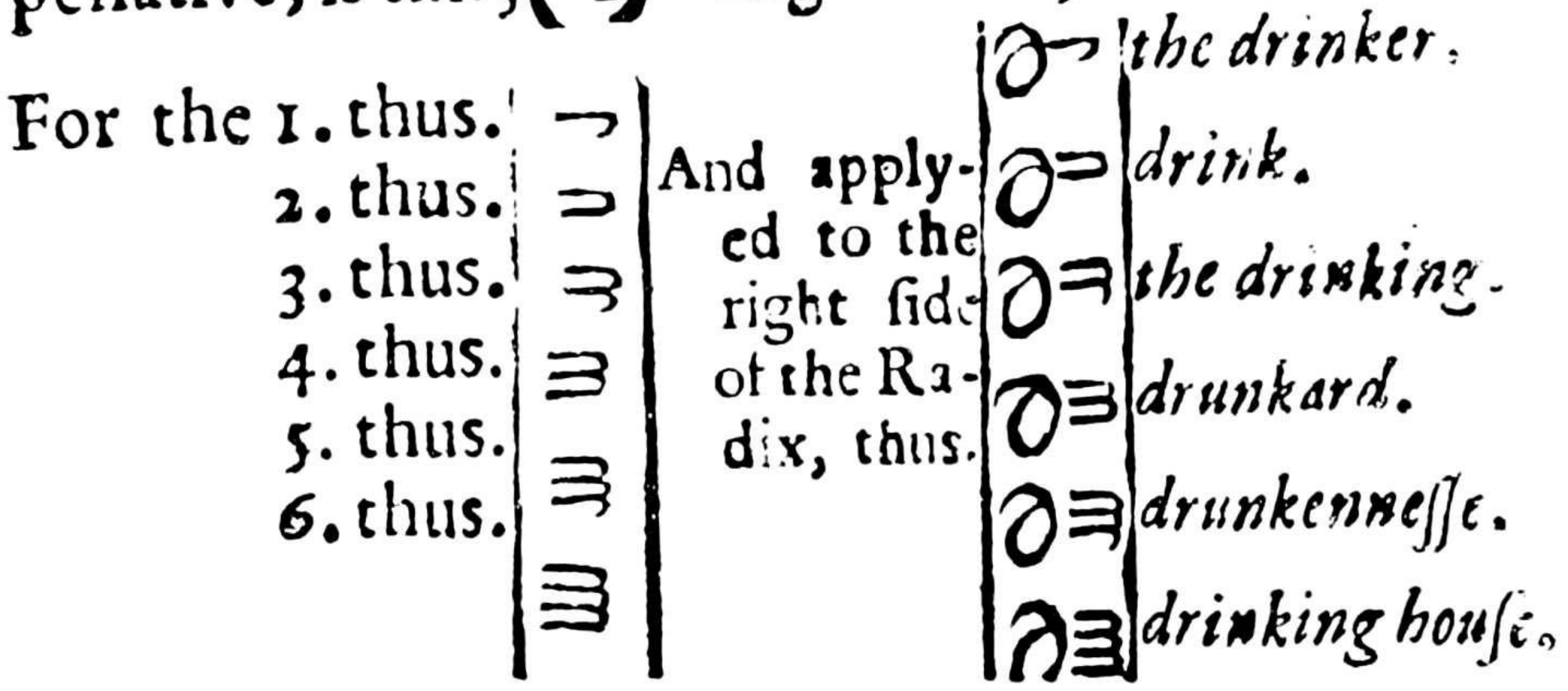
future tenſe, thus.

The 5. Section.

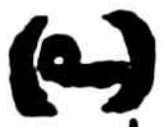
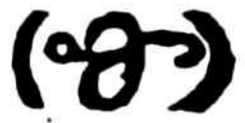
Nothing to characterize.

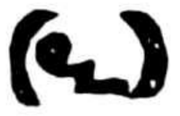
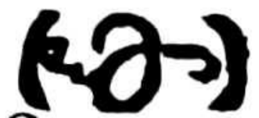
The 6. Section.

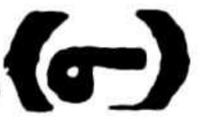
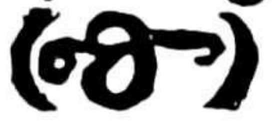
The ſigne of the ſix ſorts of Nounes Subſtantive Appellative, is this,  augmented, as under.


For the 1. thus.
2. thus.
3. thus.
4. thus.
5. thus.
6. thus.
And applyed to the right ſide of the Radix, thus.
the drinker.
drink.
the drinking.
drunkard.
drunkenneſſe.
drinking houſe.

The 7. Section.

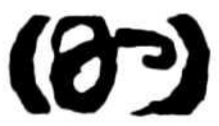
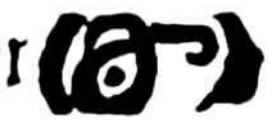
The diſtinctionall ſigne for the proper names ſhall be this,  joyned to the left ſide of the Radix, toward the head thereof, thus. 

The ſigne of the feminine gender ſhall be this,  placed as following. 

The ſubordinall ſigne for the young ones ſhall be this,  placed as following. 

The 8. Section.

The numericall ſigne for the plurall number of the nounes, ſhall be a prick in the body of the noune, (which if it were in the verb would ſignifie the paſſive ſignification thereof) as following.

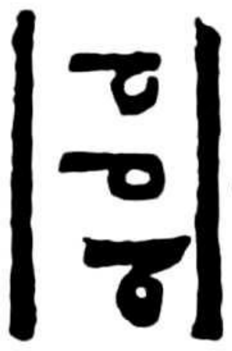
 drinker  drinkers.

The

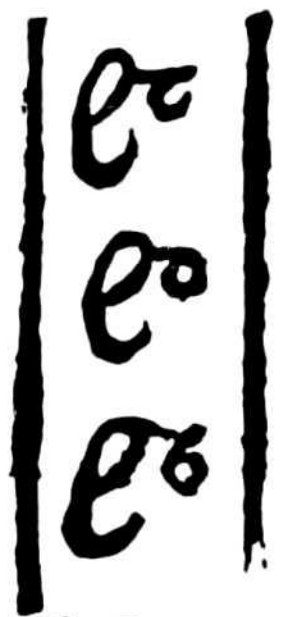
The diminutive ſign is this ſtroke, (|) drawn through the nominall ſigne thus, (⊅) as following, (∂ǂ) a ſmall drinking houſe.

The 9. Section.

The ſigne of the three ſorts of nounes adjective, is this, (−) thus varied

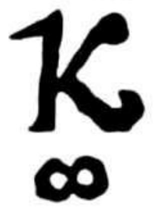


applyed thus,



the loving.
the beloved.
the lovely.

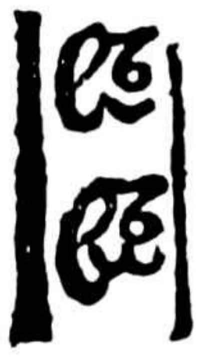
The ſubdiſtinctionall ſigne for the declaration, this, (∞) ſubſcribed thus,



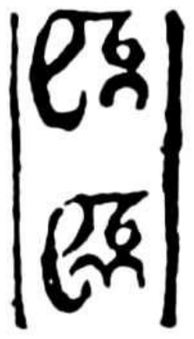
to declare any thing kleane.

The 10. Section.

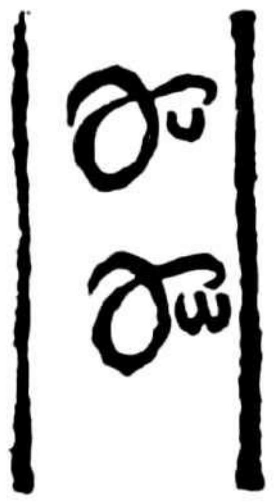
The comparative encreaſing ſign is this, (υ) and For the ſuperlative, the ſame doubled, thus, (ω) The comparative decreaſing ſigne is the former, turned thus, (∩) and for the ſuperlative, the ſame doubled thus, (m) applyed as under,



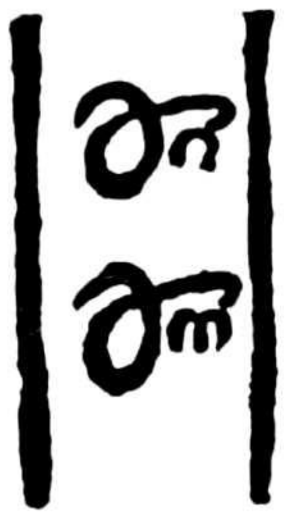
lovelyer,
lovelyeſt.



leſſe lovely,
leaſt lovely.

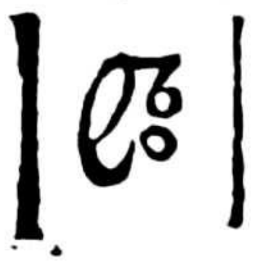


greater drinker,
greateſt drinker,



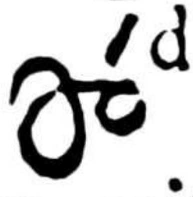
leſſe drinker,
leaſt drinker.

The privative ſigne this, (o) and applyed thus,

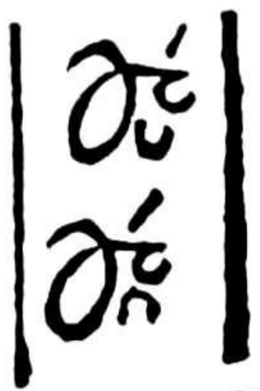
 leſſe lovely.

The 11. *Section.*

The adverbiall ſigne is this, (/) applyed thus,

 drinkingly.

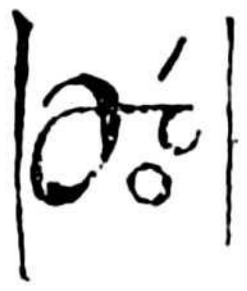
Both Compariſons are hereto applyed thus:



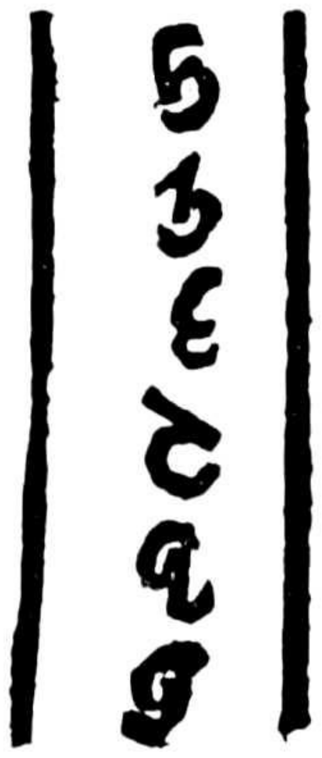
drinkinglyer,

leſſe drinkingly, &c.

The privative thus:

 undrinkingly.

The Radicall Adverbs Characterized, as followeth.

Of time.		*Of place.*		*Of the manner.*	
when	a	where		how	h
then	b	there		thus	h
now	c	here		*Of liking.*	
preſently *or* anon	d	far		whether	ʋ
early	d	neere		why	m
late	ε	yonder			

Affirming.		*Denying.*		*Doubting.*	
yea	(ˤ)	no	(ɒ)	if	(⫟)

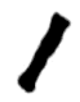
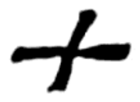
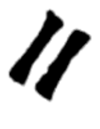
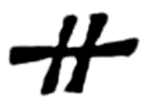
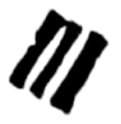
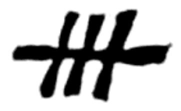
The 12. *Section.*

The ſign of the perſonall pronounes, is this (ɩ)

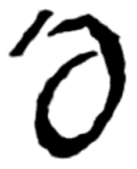
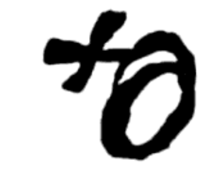
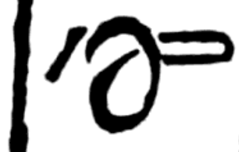
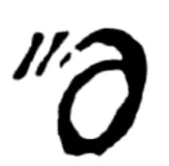
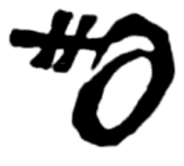
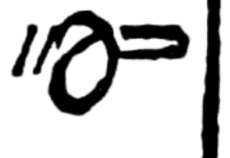
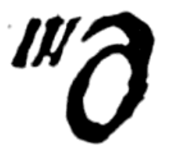
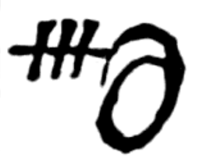
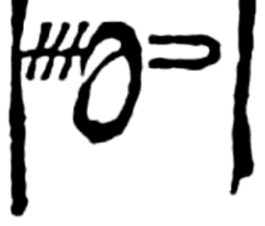
For

---

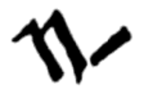
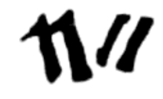
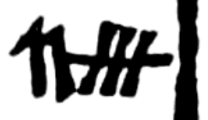
16 liking: *asking*

For the firſt, *I*		Sing.	we		plur.
thou,			ye		
he,			they		

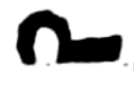
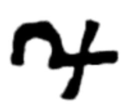
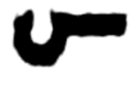
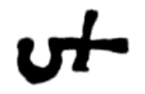
Their place in conjunction with a Verb or Noune, is on the left ſide thereof, as

I drink		we drink		my	
thou drinkeſt,		ye drink		thy	
he drinketh,		they drink		their	

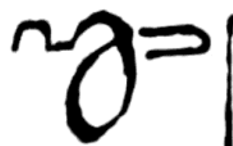
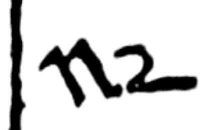
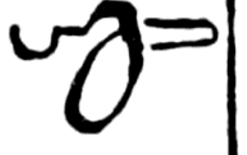
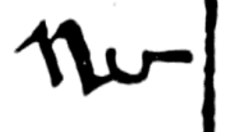
But joyned with either Advers,Prepoſitions,or Conjunctions, their place is on the right hand, as

	from me,
	from thee,
	from them.

The demonſtrative Characters are theſe,

	this,		theſe,
	that,		thoſe.

Their place joyned before either Verb or Noune, is on the left hand, but with the other undeclined parts, is on the right hand, as

	this	drink.		from this
	that			from that

The Relative character is (8) *who or which.*

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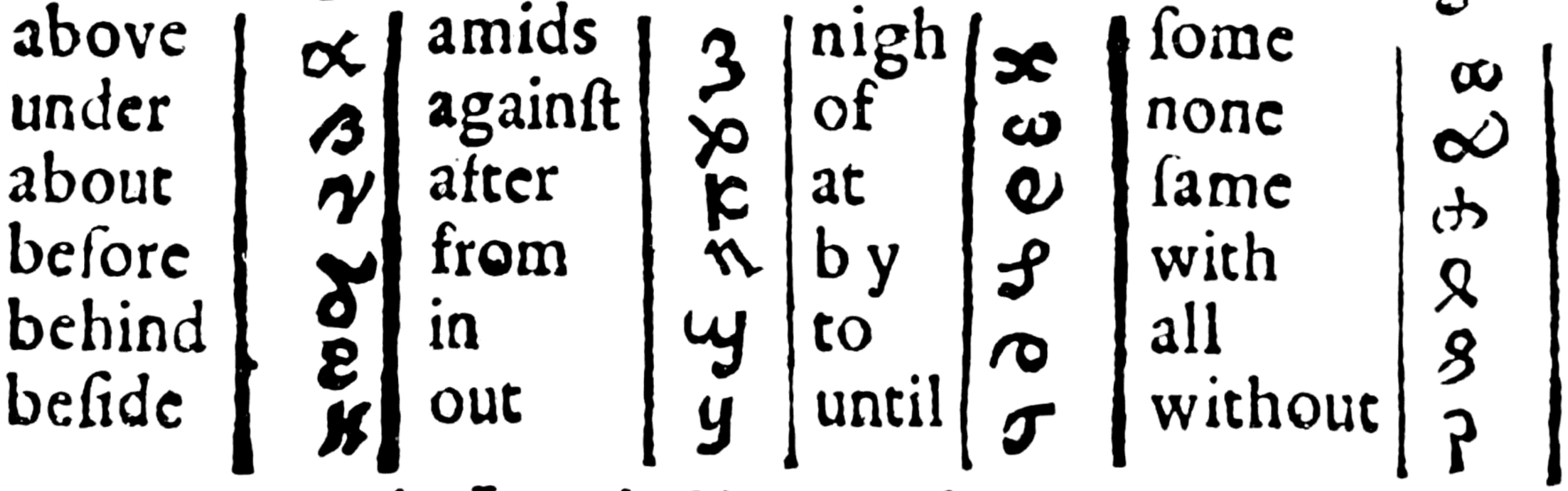
[9] Advers: *Adverbs*

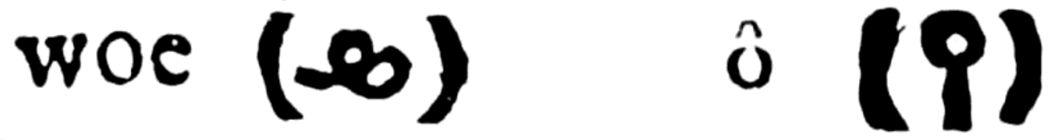
The 13. Section.

The Prepoſitionall characters are theſe following:



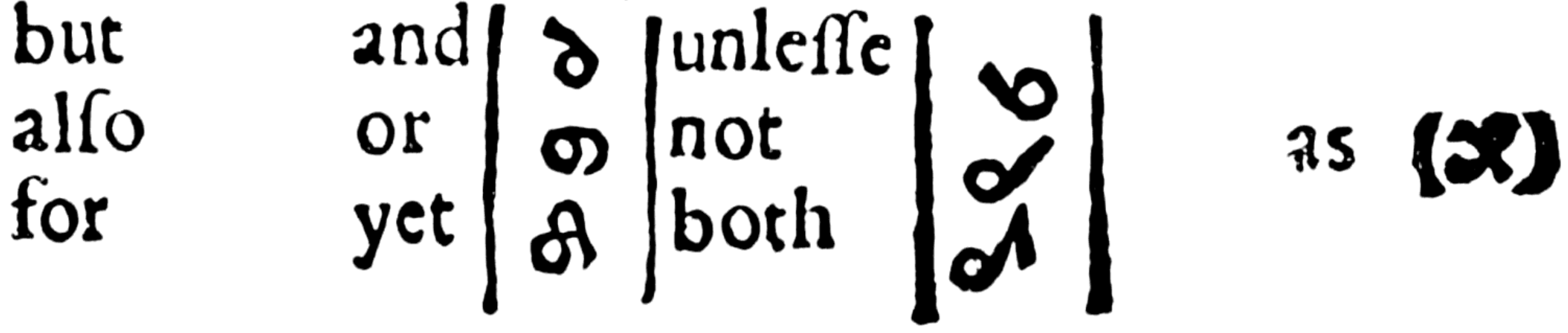
above	amids	nigh	ſome
under	againſt	of	none
about	after	at	ſame
before	from	b y	with
behind	in	to	all
beſide	out	until	without

The Interjectionall characters.



woe ô

The Conjunctionall Characters.



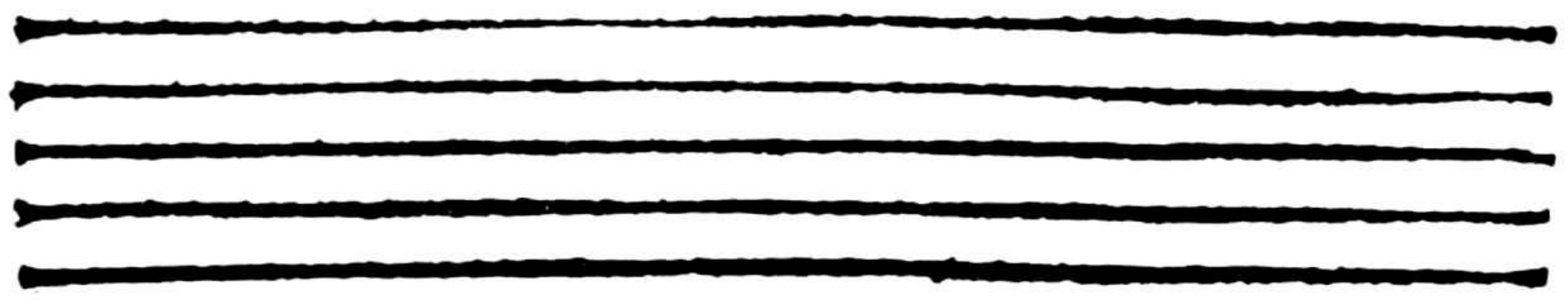
but	and	unleſſe	as
alſo	or	not	
for	yet	both	

The end of the ſecond part.

The Third Part.

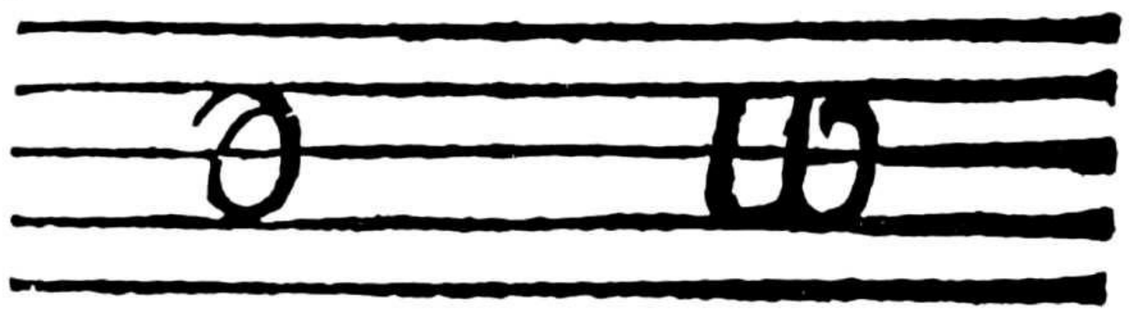
IT will be neceſſary, before I come to exemplifie the former doctrine, to premiſe ſomething concerning the manner of joyning the aforeſaid characters with their proportion one to the other, for the more comlyneſſe of the writing.

Suppoſe five lines drawne one under the other, at a convenient diſtance; as here under.



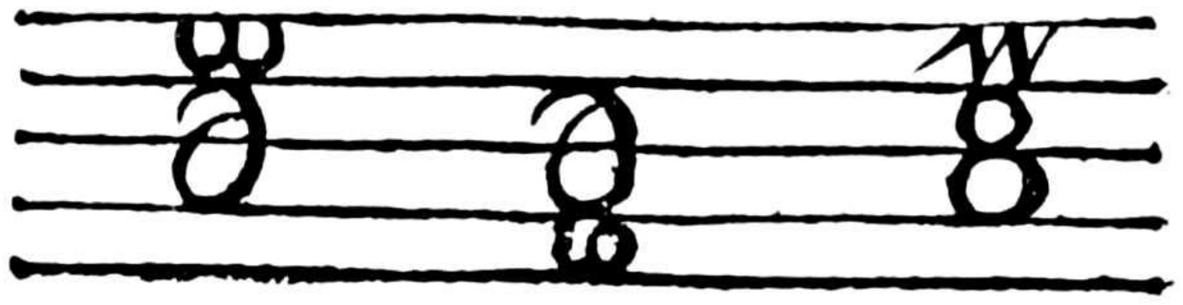
1. The Radix with its dependance, is not to exceed neither the upper nor under line.

2. The Radix is to be contained betweene the ſecond and fourth lines, and not to exceed either, neither to be leſſer, then that diſtance allowes, as



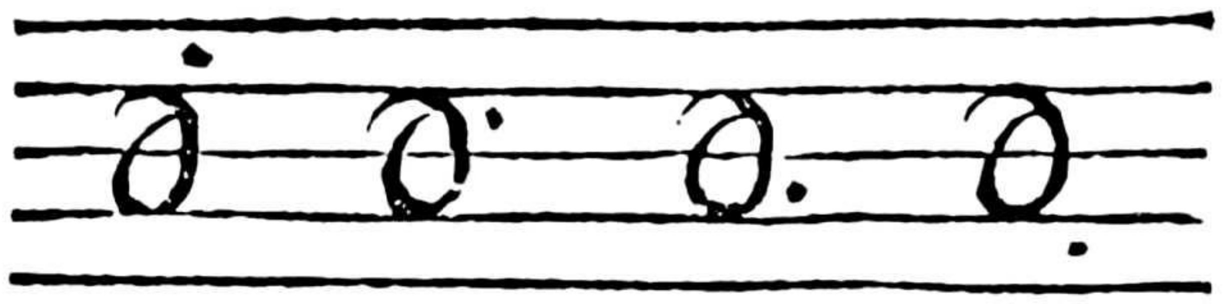
3. The diſtinctionall ſignes, which are to be ſuperſcribed above the Radix, are not in bigneſſe to exceed the diſtance between the firſt and ſecond line.

4. The augmentive ſignes, which are to be ſubſcribed under the Radix, are not in bigneſſe to exceed the diſtance between the fourth and fift line.

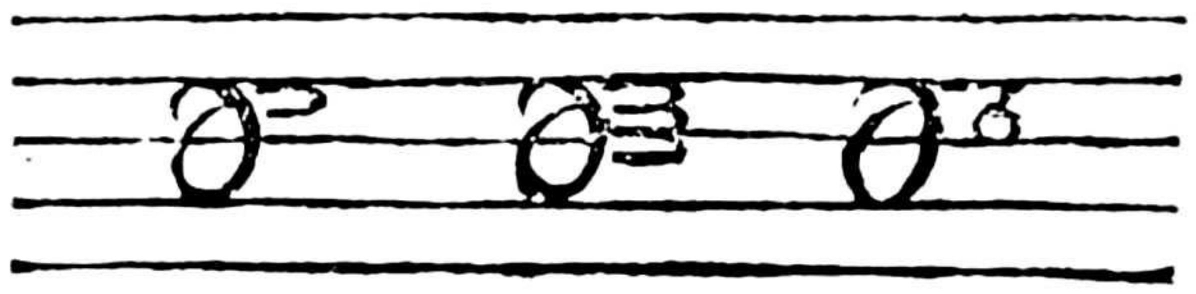


5. The

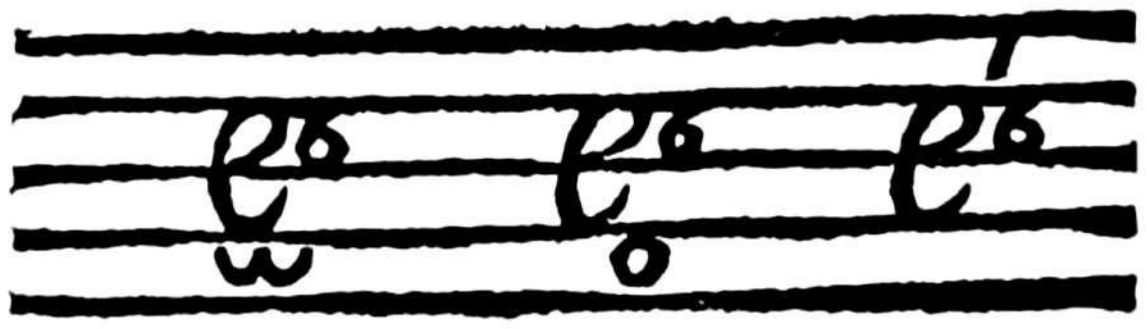
5. The foure diſtinctions of the tenſes, are thus to ſtand on the right ſide of the Radix; the firſt betweene the firſt and ſecond line; the ſecond between the ſecond and third line; the third between the third and fourth line; the fourth between the fourth and fift line, as under.



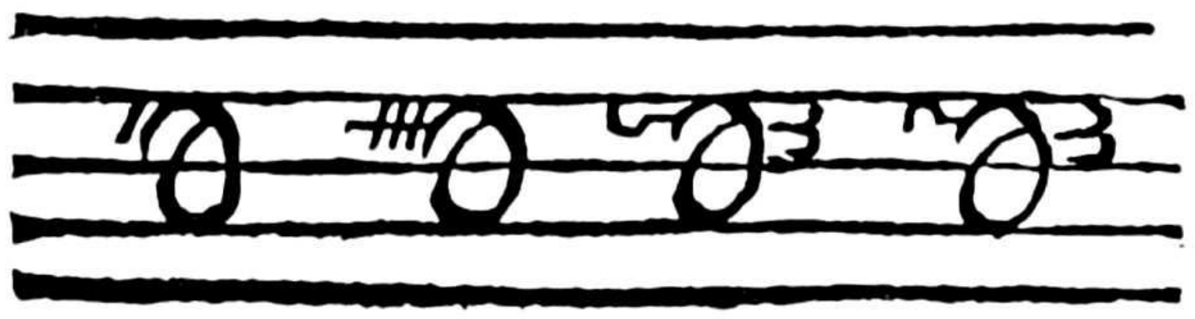
6. The diſtinction of the Nounes Subſtantives and Adjectives, placed on the right hand of the Radix, are to be contained between the ſecond and fourth lines, and to begin at the ſecond, as under.



7. The comparative and private ſignes, are to be contained between the fourth and fift lines, and the adverbiall ſigne, between the firſt and ſecond lines, as here under.



8. The perſonall and demonſtrative pronominal ſigns being placed on the right hand of the verb or noune, are to be contained between the ſecond and third line.



9 The

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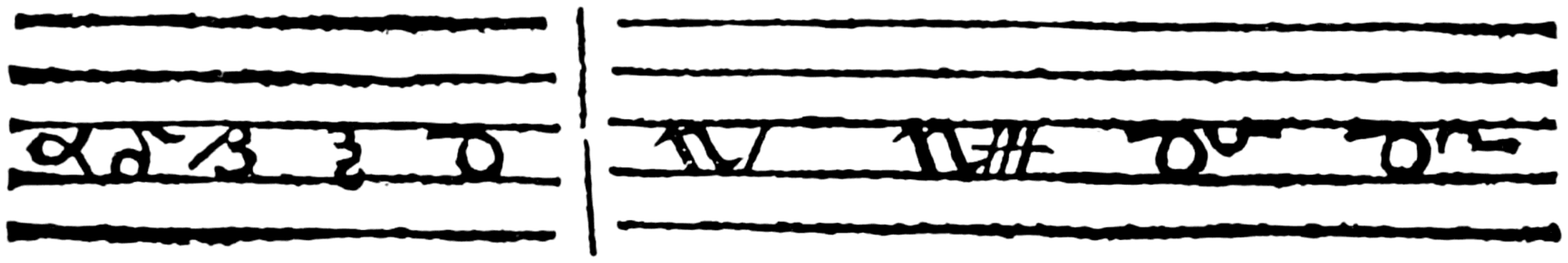
[11] private: *privative*

9. The Radicall Adverbs, Prepoſitions, Interjections, and Conjunctions, with the relative Pronoune, are to be contained between the 3 and 4 lines,in regard they are but to be half ſo big as the verball Radixes.

And the perſonall, and demonſtrative Pronounes, adjoyned to any of theſe on the right hand, the ſame are likewiſe, with theſe, to be comprehended between the 3. and 4. lines, as under.



Note, that the Article [*the*] ſo often uſed in the Engliſh, as alſo in other Languages, may be left out, without marring the ſenſe, as will appeare in the Latine, where it is not uſed, as

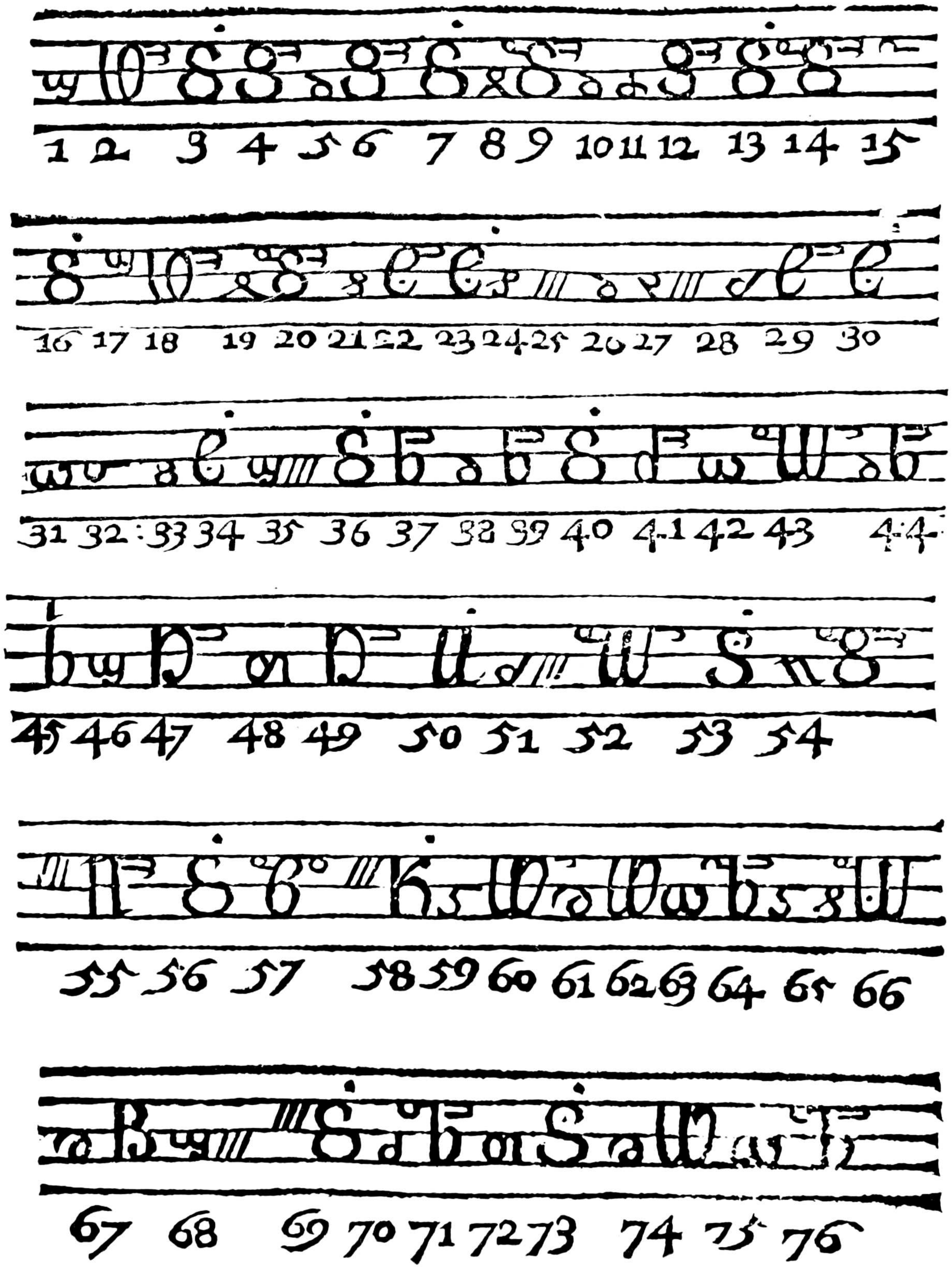
In—principio creavit Deus—cœlum & —terram:

In Engliſh,

In *the* beginning God created *the* heavens and *the* earth, &c.

This Article therefore for abbreviations ſake, we have left out, in this our writing.

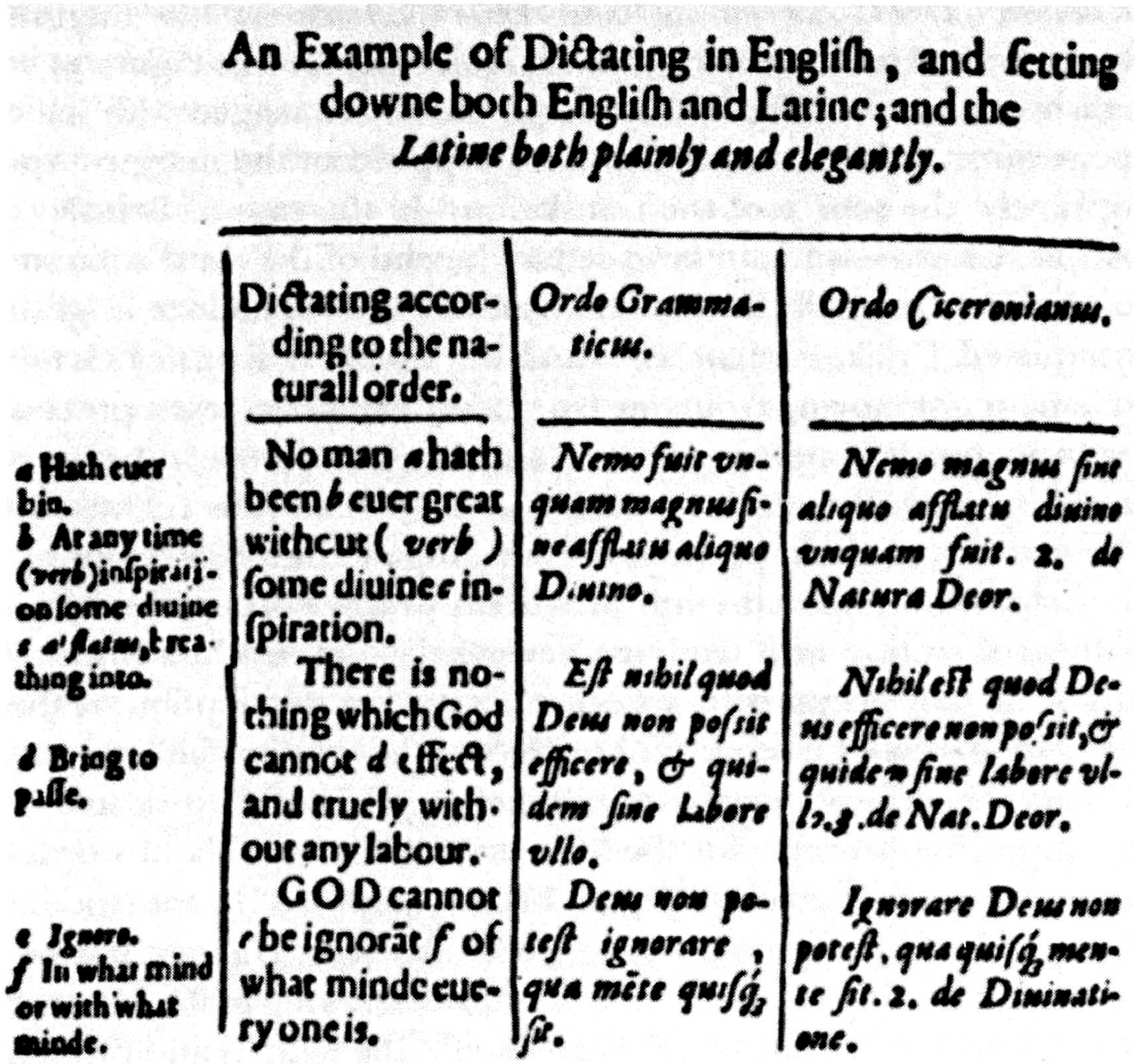
And ſecondly, that we might therein the better agree with thoſe that uſe not the ſaid, or not ſo often. Now for the applying of the aforeſaid to practice, wee ſhall give you an example thereof, and that in the eight firſt verſes of the firſt Chapter of Saint *Johns* Goſpel: and after that, the ſignification of each character with reference thereof for the diſtinctionall appendixes, to the Sections of two firſt parts, where their formation is handled.


1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15
16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30
31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44
45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54
55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66
67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76

John Brinsley

Ludus Literatus *(1612) is a comprehensive treatise on education along distinctly humanist lines, specifically offering a method of translation "by which speech is transposed into visual units" apportioned to various charted divisions. The first column presents the master's translation of a passage of Cicero included in the third column. The middle column presents the translation of the English back into the "ordo Grammaticus" (natural order). In passing to the final column the student returns to the point from which the master started. Brinsley's pedagogical theory of translation involves a capital urge that students be taught Greek and Latin through English. This insistence that a knowledge of English be foundational in education proved influential in the humanist language program of the seventeenth century.*

Sample Dictation

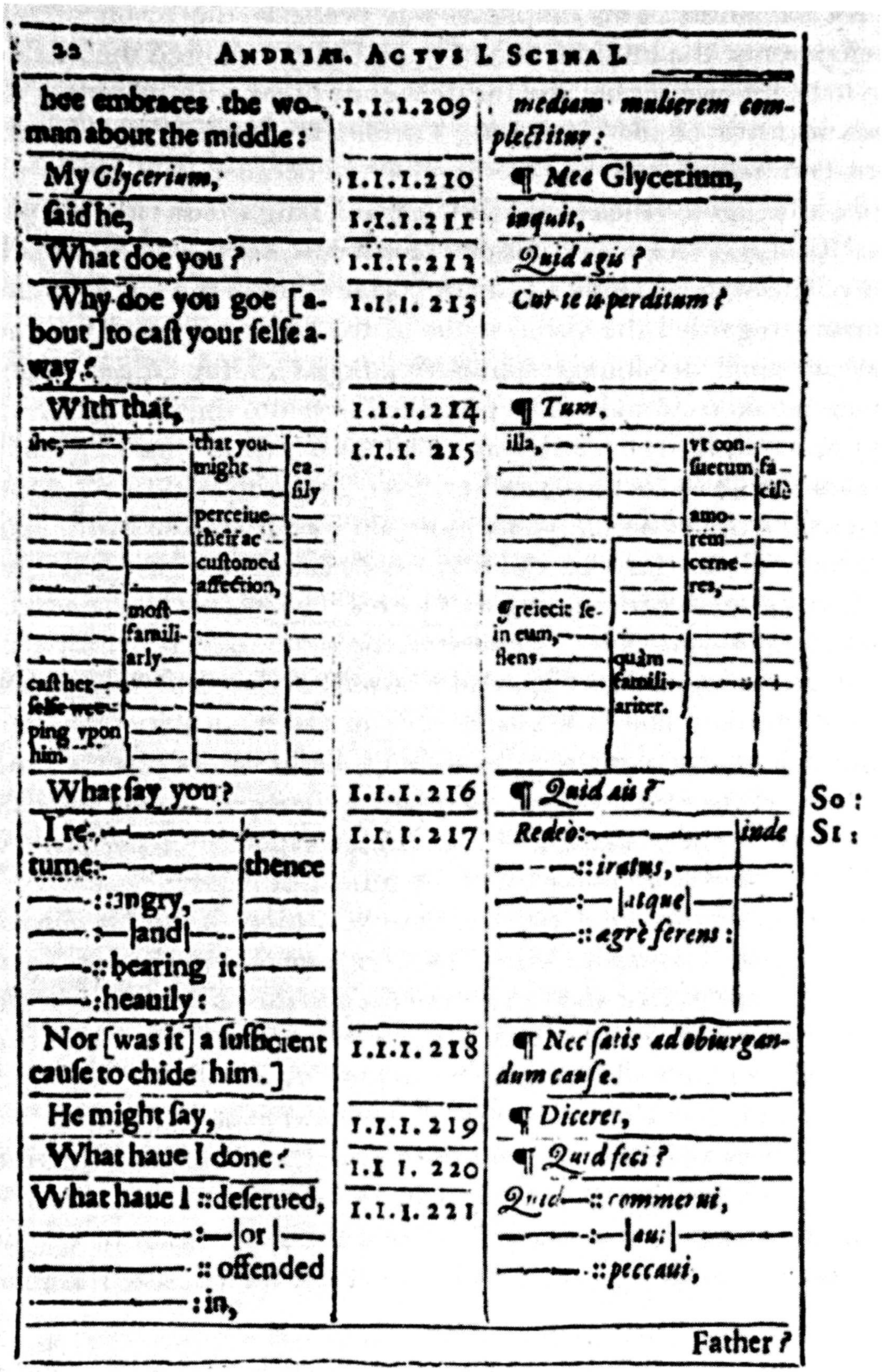


An Example of Dictating in Engliſh, and ſetting downe both Engliſh and Latine; and the *Latine both plainly and elegantly.*

	Dictating according to the naturall order.	*Ordo Grammaticus.*	*Ordo Ciceronianus.*
a Hath euer bin. b At any time (*verb*) inſpiration ſome diuine c *afflatus*, breathing into.	No man a hath been b euer great without (*verb*) ſome diuine c inſpiration.	*Nemo fuit vnquam magnus ſine afflatu aliquo Diuino.*	*Nemo magnus ſine aliquo afflatu diuino vnquam fuit. 2. de Natura Deor.*
d Bring to paſſe.	There is nothing which God cannot d effect, and truely without any labour.	*Eſt nihil quod Deus non poſsit efficere, & quidem ſine labore vllo.*	*Nihil eſt quod Deus efficere non poſsit, & quidem ſine labore vllo. 3. de Nat. Deor.*
e *Ignoro.* f In what minde or with what minde.	GOD cannot e be ignorāt f of what minde euery one is.	*Deus non poteſt ignorare, qua mēte quiſq; ſit.*	*Ignorare Deus non poteſt, qua quiſq; mente ſit. 2. de Diuinatione.*

Joseph Webbe

A friend of Samuel Hartlib, Webbe established his own grammar school and was well known in his day for his idiosyncratic methods of teaching language. Webbe claims his method of claused translation derives from the practice of Cicero. He treats the rhetorical period as a series of clauses knitted together at appropriate junctions. The method "involves 'unknitting' the clauses and placing them into parallel boxes where the Latin clause sits adjacent to its English translation. The periods having thus been broken into clauses, the student can then recombine clauses at will to generate his own sentences." According to Webbe's calculations, clausing is "superior because it allows 'placing,' or word order, to be 'observable not onely by the eare, but by the eye also.'" The method is designed less to teach students how to read and translate classical texts than to construct correct sentences by clausal recombinations. Good humanist writing is a recombinatory art of prior utterances taken to an extreme degree. In his preface to the Andria *Webbe advances the bold claim that his recombinant method can generate all possible utterances in the style of Terence save for modern place names. Other "claused" translations include Cicero's* Ad Atticum *(1627),* Pueriles confabulatiunculae *(1627), and Terence's* Eunuch *(1629).*



22 ANDRIÆ. ACTVS I. SCENA I.

hee embraces the woman about the middle:	I.I.I.209	*mediam mulierem complectitur:*
My *Glycerium*,	I.I.I.210	¶ *Mea* Glycerium,
ſaid he,	I.I.I.211	*inquit,*
What doe you?	I.I.I.212	*Quid agis?*
Why doe you goe [about] to caſt your ſelfe away?	I.I.I.213	*Cur te is perditum?*
With that,	I.I.I.214	¶ *Tum,*
she, that you might easily perceiue their accustomed affection, moſt familiarly caſt her ſelfe weeping vpon him.	I.I.I.215	illa, vt conſuetum facilè amorem cerneres, ¶ reiecit ſe in eum, flens quàm familiariter.
What ſay you?	I.I.I.216	¶ *Quid ais?*
I returne: thence ::angry, :|and| ::bearing it :heauily:	I.I.I.217	*Redeò:* *inde* ::*iratus,* :|*atque*| ::*agrè ferens:*
Nor [was it] a ſufficient cauſe to chide him.]	I.I.I.218	¶ *Nec ſatis ad obiurgandum cauſe.*
He might ſay,	I.I.I.219	¶ *Diceret,*
What haue I done?	I.I.I.220	¶ *Quid feci?*
What haue I ::deſerued, :|or| ::offended :in,	I.I.I.221	*Quid*::*commerui,* :|*aut*| ::*peccaui,*

Father?

So:
Si:

Anonymous

With a distant resemblance to kabbalistic gematria, the chronogram exploits the status of certain Latin letters as carriers of numerical value (M = 1000, D = 500, C = 100, L = 50, V = 5, I = 1). The chronogram was classified by Addison as a species of "false wit" along with acrostics, anagrams, and concrete poetry.

A Double Chronogram

A double Chronogram (*the one in Latine the other in the English of that Latine*) upon the year 1642

TV DeVs IaM propItIVs sIs regI regnoqVe
hVIC VnI Verso.

O goD noVV sheVV faVoVr to the kIng
anD thIs VVhoLe LanD.

John Wilkins

Of Writing by Invented Characters

Besides the Ways of Secret Writing by the common Letters, there may likewise be divers others by invented Notes.

The Difference of Characters, whereby several Languages are exprest, is part of the second general Curse in the Confusion of Tongues; for as before there was but one Way of Speaking, so also but one Way of Writing. And as now, not only Nations, but particular Men, may discover their Thoughts by any different articulate Sounds, so likewise by any written Signs.

These invented Characters in the General, are distinguishable into such as signifie, either

1. *Letters.*
2. *Words.*
3. *Things, and Notions.*

First, concerning those that signify Letters: To which kind some Learned Men refer the *Hebrew* Character that is now in use; affirming, that *Ezra* first invented it, thereby the better to conceal the Secrets of their Law, and that they might not have so much as their Manner of Writing common with the *Samaritans* and other Schismaticks.

'Twere but needless to set down any Particulars of this kind, since it is so easy for any ordinary Man to invent or vary them at Pleasure.

The Rules that are usually prescribed for the unfolding of such Characters, are briefly these.

1. Endeavour to distinguish betwixt the Vowels and Consonants. The Vowels may be known by their Frequency, there being no Word without some of them. If there be any single Character in *English,* it must be one of these three Vowels, *a, i, o.*

2. Search after the several Powers of the Letters: For the understanding of this, you must mark which of them are most common, and which more seldom used. (This the Printers in any Language can easily inform you of, who do accordingly provide their Sets of Letters.) Which of them may be doubled, and which not, as *H, Q, X, Y.* And then, for the Number of Vowels or Consonants in the Beginning, Middle, or End of Words, a Man must provide several Tables, whence he may readily guess at any Word, from the Number and Nature of the Letters that make it: As, what Words consist only of Vowels; what have one Vowel, and one Consonant; whether the Vowel be first, as in these Words, *Am, an, as, if, in, is, it, of, on, or, us;* or last, as in these Words, *Be, he, me, by, dy, ly, my, ty, do, to, so,* &c. And so for all other Words, according to their several Quantities and Natures.

These Tables must be various, according to the Difference of Languages. There are divers the like Rules to be observed, which are too tedious to recite; you may fee them largely handled by *Baptista Porta,* and *Gustavus Selenus.*

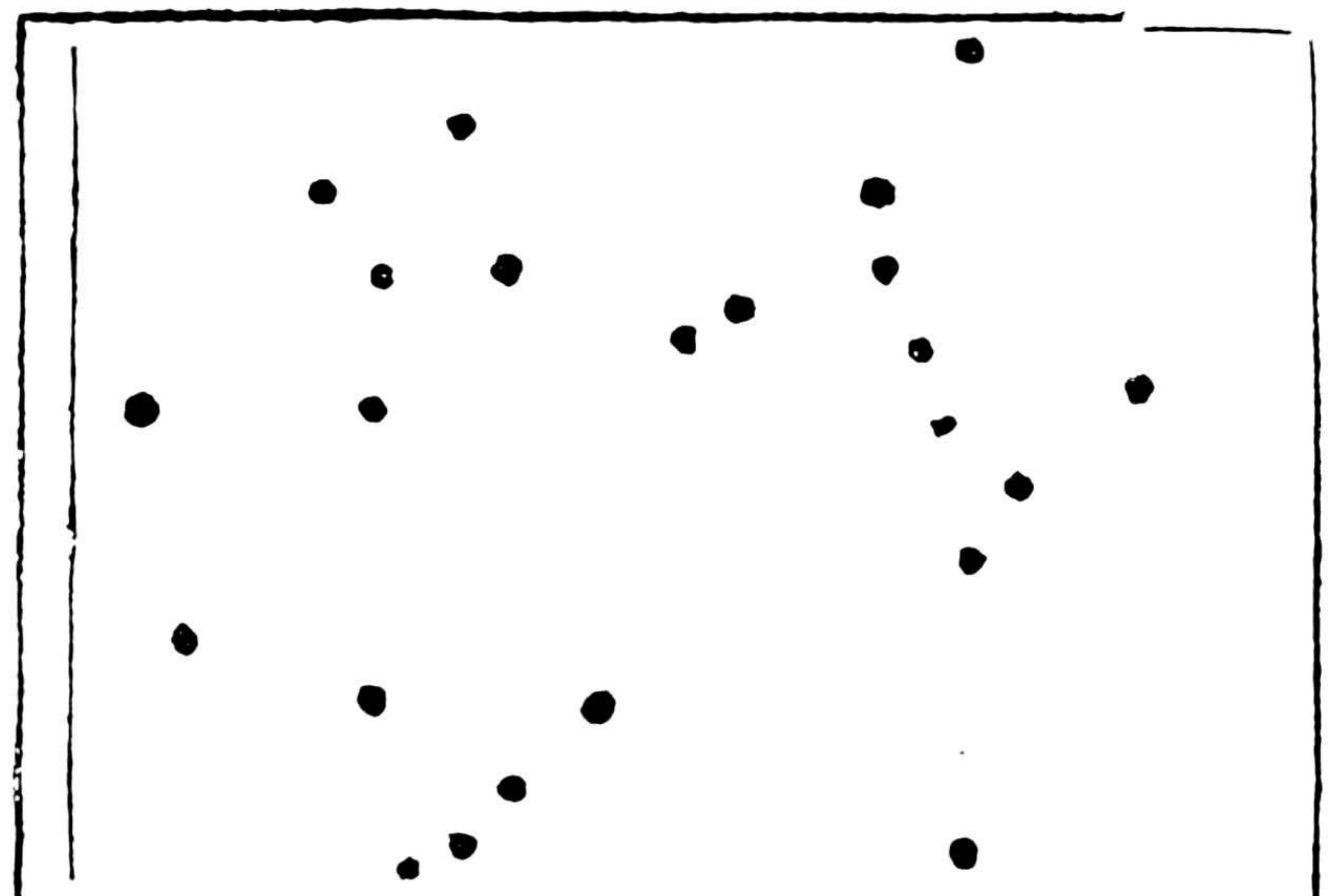
The common Rules of unfolding being once known, a Man may the better tell how to delude them; either by leaving out those Letters that are of less Use, as *H, K, Q, X, Y;* and putting other Characters instead of them, that shall signify the Vowels: So that the Number of this invented Alphabet will be perfect; and the Vowels, by reason of their double Character, less distinguishable. Or a Man may likewise delude the Rules of Discovery, by writing continuately, without any Distinction betwixt the Words, or with a false Distinction, or by inserting *Nulls* and *Non-significants,* &c.

These Characters are besides liable to all those other Ways whereby the common Letters may be obscured, whether by changing their *Places,* or their *Powers.*

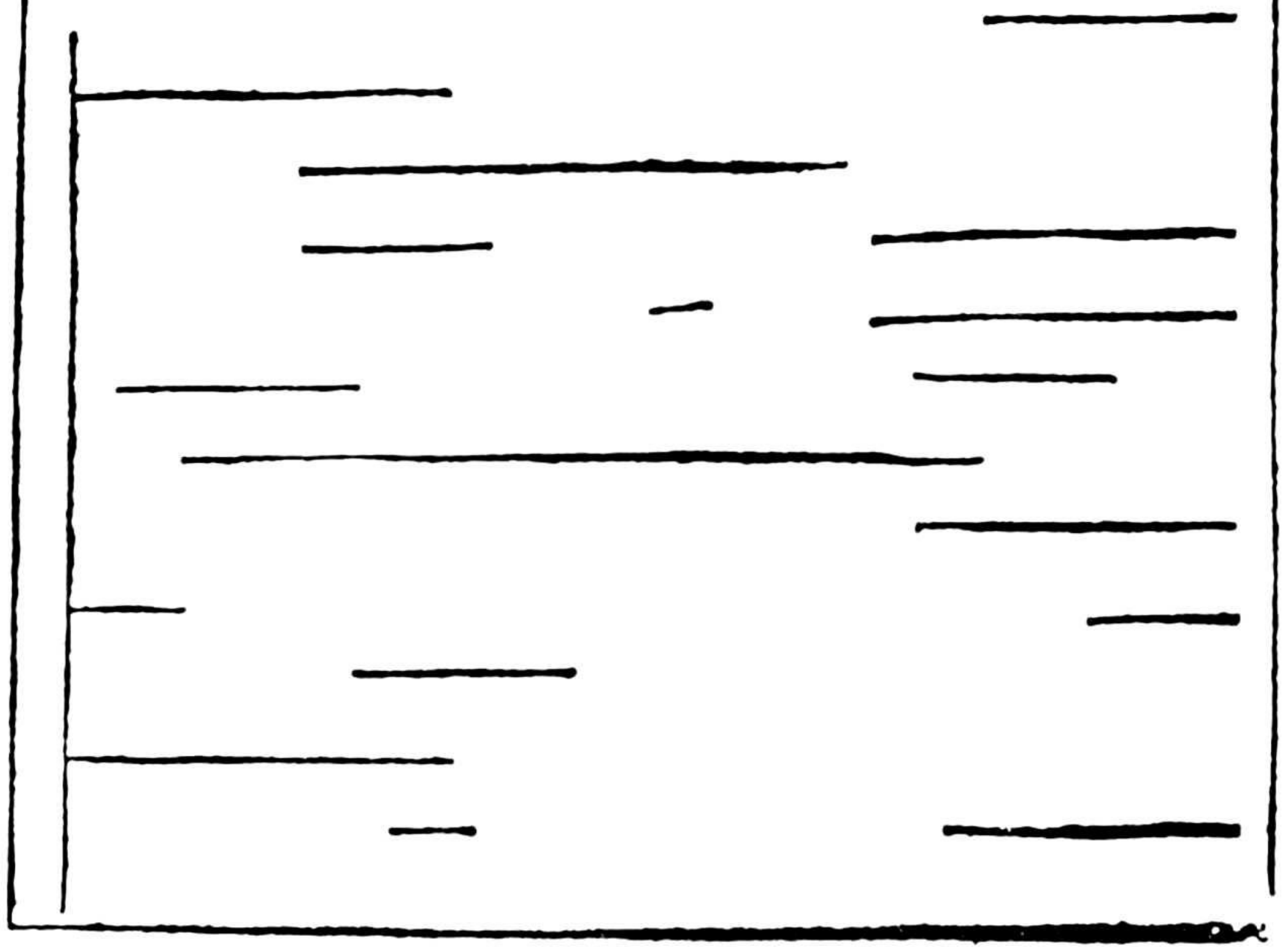
The Particulars of this kind, may be of such great Variety, as cannot be distinctly recited: But it is the grand Inconvenience of all these Ways of Secresy by invented Characters, that they are not without Suspicion.

For the remedying of which, there have been some other Inventions of writing by Points, or Lines, or Figures; wherein a Man would never mistrust any private Message, there being nothing to be discerned in these Kinds of Intimation, but only either some Confused and Casual, or else some Mathematical Descriptions; as you may see in these following Examples.

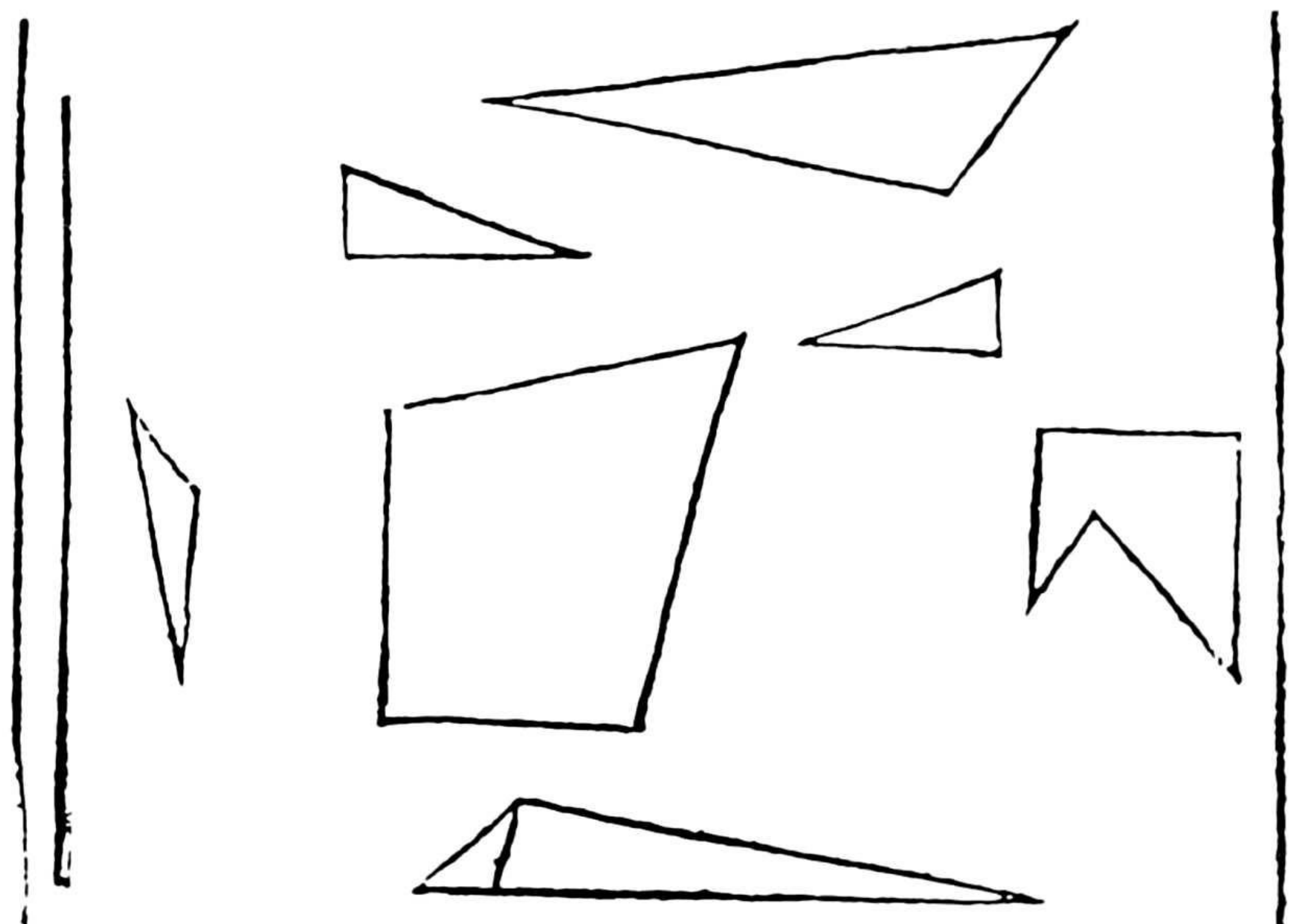
By Points alone.



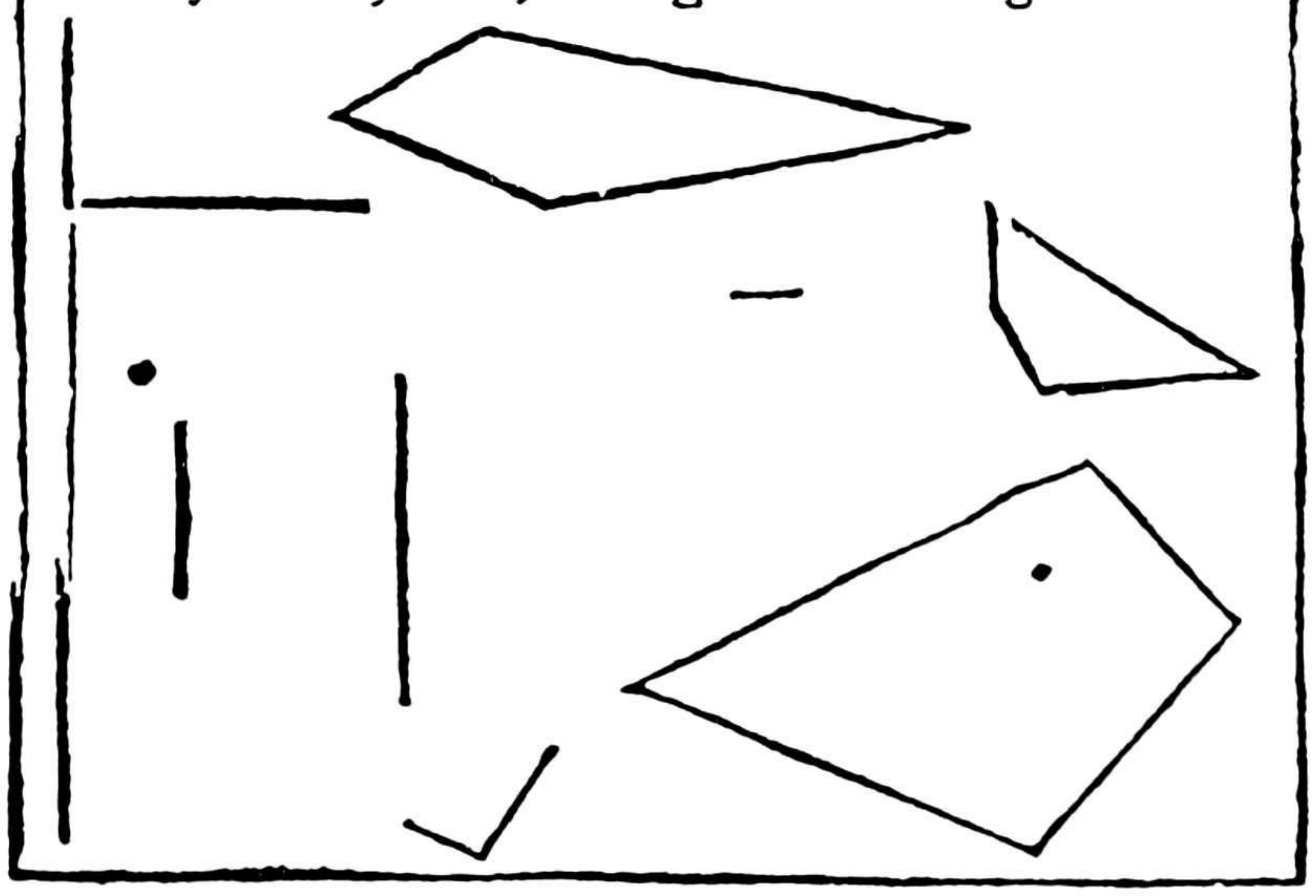
By Lines alone.



By Mathematical Figures.



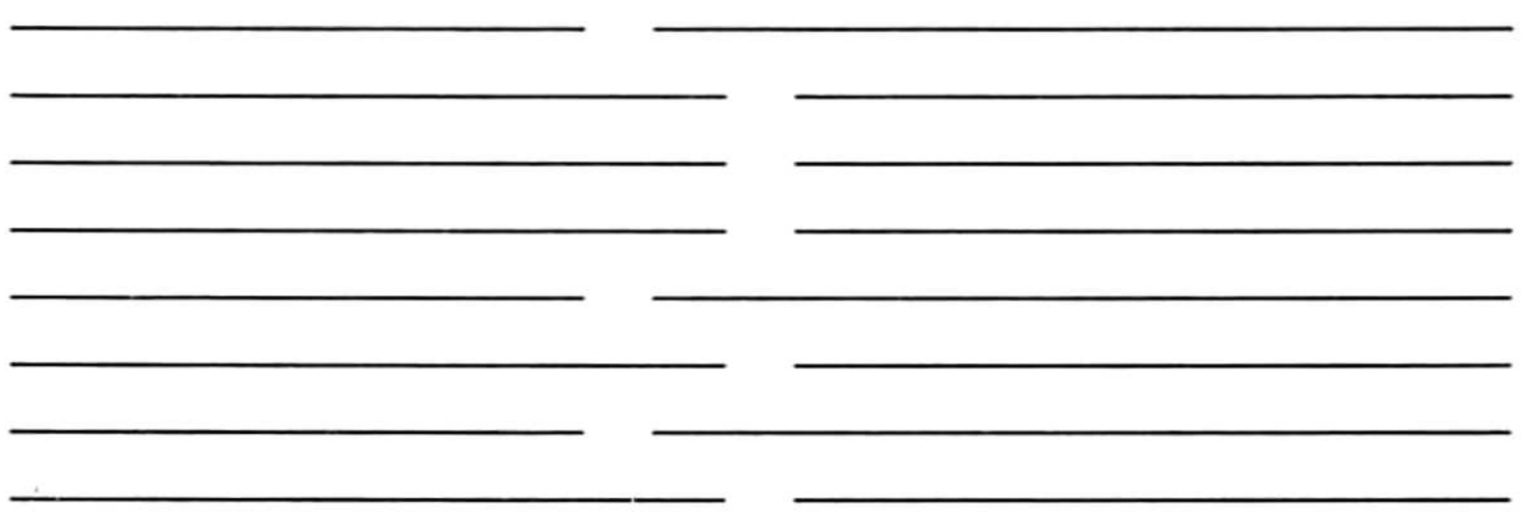
By Points, Lines, and Figures mixed together.



Each of which Figures do express these Words: There is no Safety but by Flight.

Ye sacred Nine—that all my soul possess,
Whose raptures fire me,—and whose visions bless,
Bear me, oh bear me—to sequester'd scenes,
To bo wery mazes—and surrounding greens,
To Thames's banks—which fragrant breezes fill,
Or where ye muses—sport on Cooper's hill:
On Cooper's hill—eternal wreaths shall grow,
While lasts the mountain—or while Thames shall
slow.

Here, as in the instances of various feet, we have not only the pleasure of change, but the higher delight arising from proportion. Readers of taste, though unversed in the *science* of numbers, will remember having dwelt with pleasure on the mere found of passages like this. The traces of these delightful movements frequently remain in the mind, and serve as a kind of inspiration, allowing them no rest till they have filled up the craving void of these blanks of harmony with compositions of their own. The varied and yet regular maze affords numberless objects of comparison, which to perceive is unspeakably pleasant, though to point them out minutely might seem tedious. Nay, as was before remarked on the *melody* of pauses, pleasure may be derived from a view of straight lines in the same variety and proportion. The diagram below fails to affect us with the sense, pathos, or melody of poetic compositions; but is consequently more confined to those properties I am describing, so I have reserved the minute observations to be applied to it. Besides, every ear or eye cannot discover the proportions and varieties in the verse without such assistance.



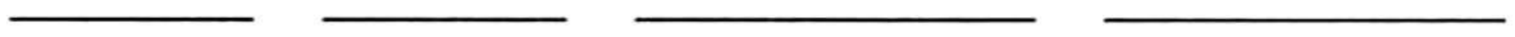
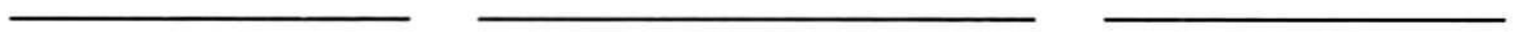
Here we first observe the uniformity of the entire lines, which are exactly equal. Then the cesural division, in which, though we are best pleased with the equal lines, we do not regret the intermixture of unequal ones, but find our delight heightened by the variety they introduce. We next divide the whole into two equal parts of four lines; we observe their similarity in quantity, yet their dissimilarity in movement: we compare the great uniformity of the first course with the great variety of the second. We then divide each of the courses into two parts, forming four divisions, and these again afford other comparisons. The dissmilarity of the two first is now compared with the similarity of the two last; the similarity of the first and last with the similarity of the two middle. But to point out every comparison that obtrudes is less pleasant than to observe them in passing. Then the mind glances over the whole with a rapidity that enhances the delight; and the more as we suppose many other proportions still unperceived. But eight lines may be graced with many different yet proportional movements; and courses may consist of any even number of lines above two. The intermixture of verses of the third order will greatly multiply the possible sorts of combination.

Still fairer prospects open into Parnassus, when we consider the farther division of lines, by two pauses, or by three, termed demicesuras thus—

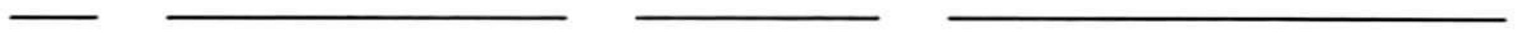
And sweet—reluctant—amorous delay,
From storms—a shelter—and from heat—a shade.

This subdivision will introduce new objects of comparison, will make single lines capable of a varied harmony in themselves, and highly musical in skilful combinations. The finest verses will be those in which two or more demicesuras are equal, as

From men—their cities—and from gods—their fanes.

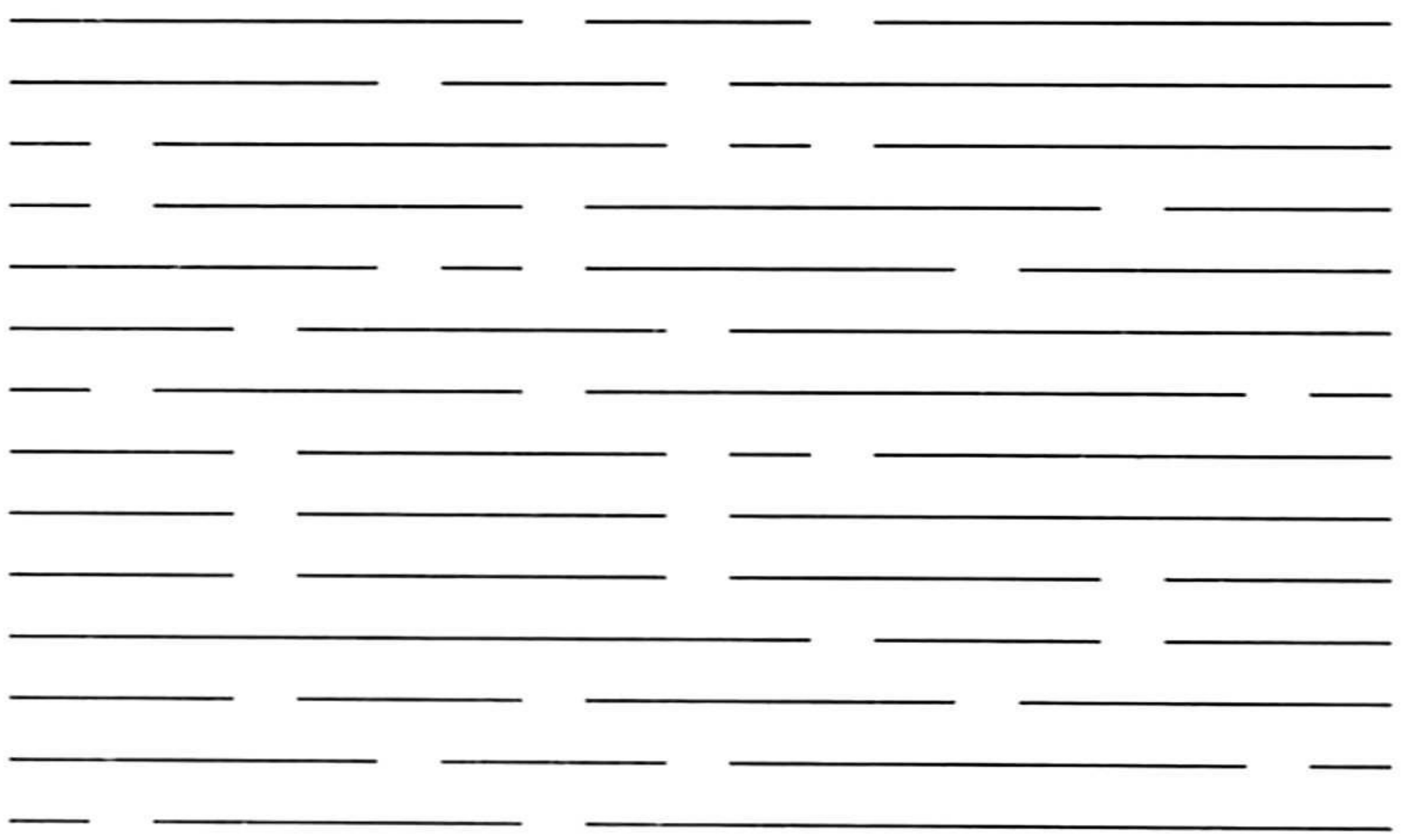
Reason—the card—but passion—is the gale.

Thus sitting—thus consulting—thus in arms.


When the portions are unequal, the best are those in which the larger are placed latest, thus

Pants—on her neck—and fans—her parting hair.


It is evident that the power of harmony and of comparison must very much increase by this subdivision when considered with respect to long courses. The following quotation, with the subjoined figure shewing its cesuras and demicesuras, will suggest the greater part of the remarks which are proper on this occasion, and tend to confirm many previous observations on harmony.

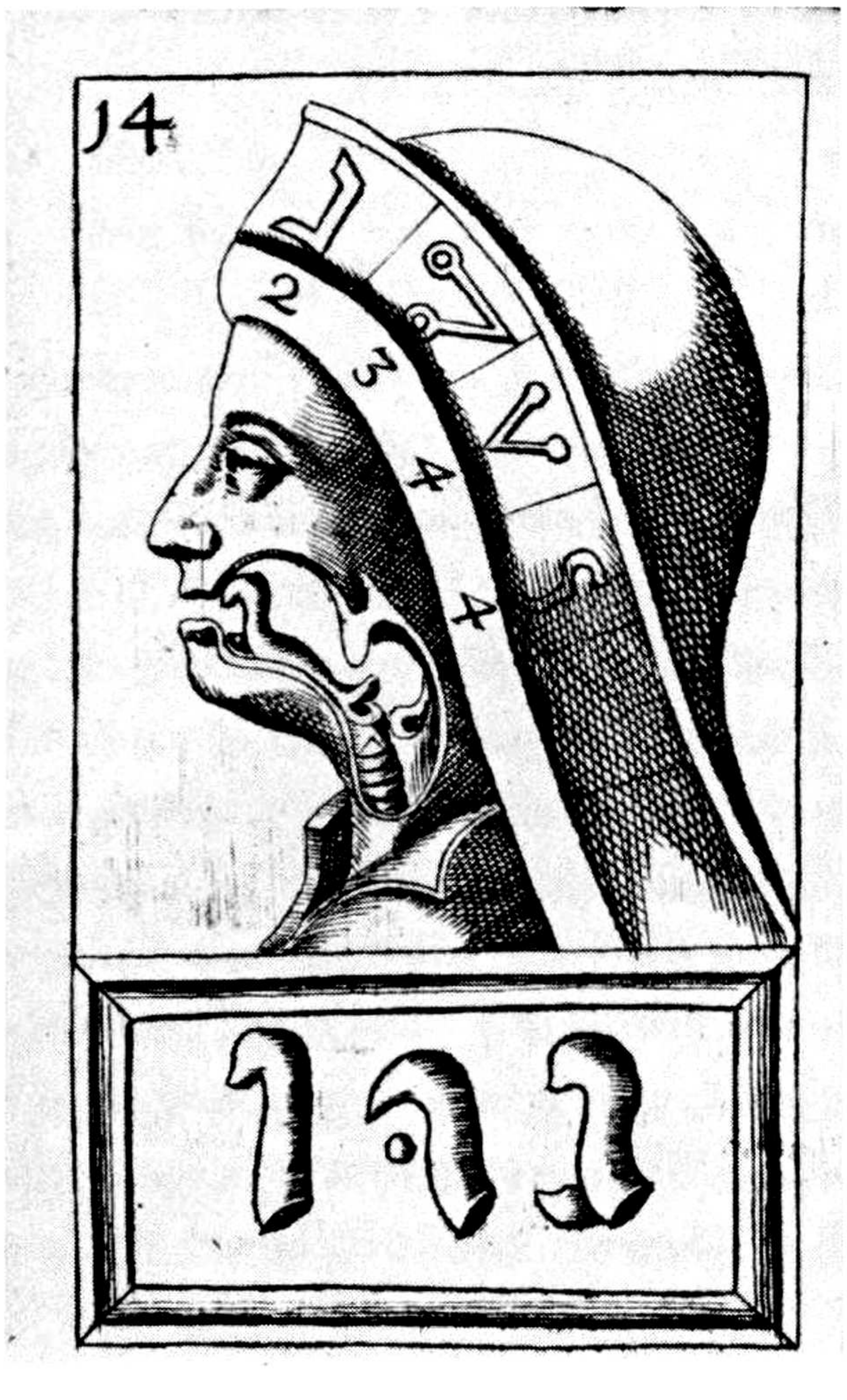
Of humbler mien, but not of mortal race,
Ill-fated Dryden, with imperial grace,
Gives to th'obedient lyre his rapid laws;
Tones yet unheard, with touch divine, he draws,
The melting fall, the rising swell sublime,
And all the magic of melodious rhyme.
See with proud joy imagination spread
A wreath of honour round his aged head!
But-two base spectres, though of different hue,
The bard unhappy in his march pursue;
Two vile disgraceful fiends of race accurst,
Conceiv'd by Spleen, by meagre Famine nurst;
Malignant Satire, mercenary Praise,
Shed their dark spots on his immortal bays.
Hayley.

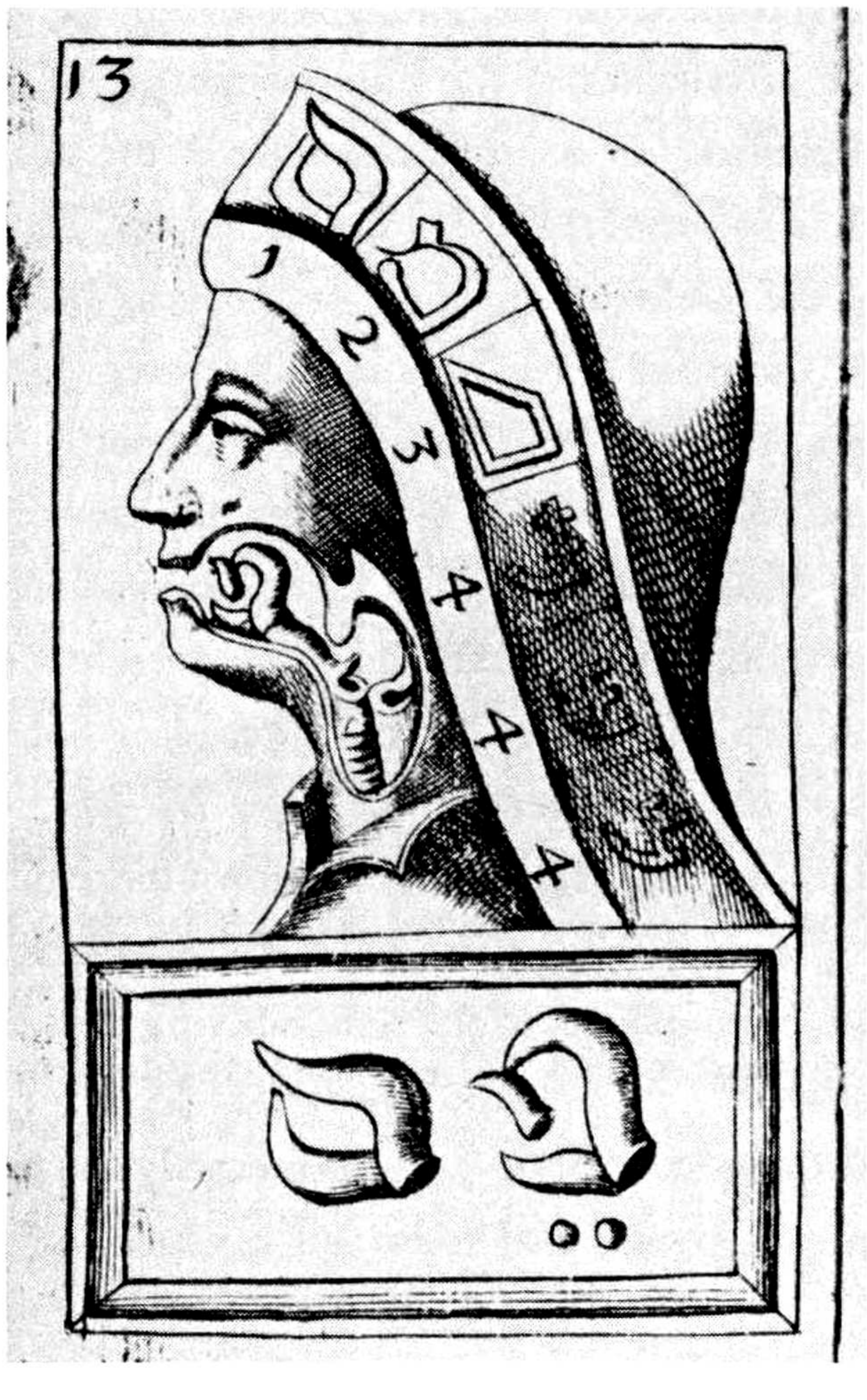


Mercurius van Helmont

Helmont offers a systematic attempt to analyze each character of the Hebrew alphabet as a representation in profile of the tongue's position at the precise moment of articulation. His interest in this amazing mimographic correlation is not so much linguistic as utilitarian and theological. His initial proposal in Alphabeti veri naturalis *is to offer a new method of teaching speech to deaf mutes, a pragmatic agenda that quickly develops into a monogenetic account of linguistic origin. By demonstrating that the holy script of Hebrew actually graphs the shape and movement of the vocal organs in utterance, Helmont hoped to prove the originary status of Hebrew as the true language of Adam, and writing as well as speech as gifts of divine revelation. An earlier and less exhaustive mimographic analysis of the shape of letters is found in the treatment of the letter "O" in Tory's* Champ Fleury *(see "Alphabetic Dimensions," p. 386 below).*

Pronunciation Diagrams





Richard Grey

Memoria Technica *(1730) is the last in a long line of artificial memory systems, but it is singular in its appeal to syllabic rather than pictorial retentions. Grey adopts a reductive method (like many of the universal language schemes of the previous century), contracting sentences into phrases and condensing phrases into syllables to be recombined in "memorial lines." Erasmus Darwin describes it as "audible jargon." Superficially this passage might be read as Dada poetry without words. However, an immense practical value derives from its transpositional consequences. From a superficial nonsensicality emerges a condensed signification. As in cryptonomy, a secreted meaning lies latent beneath a seeming nonsense.*

From *Memoria Technica*

The principal part of this method is briefly this: to remember any thing in history, chronology, geography, &c. a word is formed, the beginning whereof being the first syllable or syllables of the thing sought, does, by frequent repetition, of course draw after it the latter part, which is so contrived as to give the answer. Thus, in history, the Deluge happened in the year before Christ two thousand three hundred and forty-eight; this is signified by the word Del*etok:* Del standing for DELuge, and *etok* for 2348. In astronomy, the diameter of the sun (SOLis DIameter) is eight hundred and twenty-two thousand one hundred and forty-eight English miles; this is signified by Sol-di*ked-áfei;* Sol-di standing for the diameter of the sun, *ked-áfei* for 822,148; and so of the rest, as will be shown more fully in their proper place. How these words come to signify these things, or contribute to the remembering them, is now to be shown.

The first thing to be done is to learn exactly the following series of vowels and consonants, which are to represent the numerical figures, so as to be able, at pleasure, to form a *technical* word, which shall stand for any number, or to resolve a word already formed into the number which it stands for:

a	*e*	*i*	*o*	*u*	*au*	*oi*	*ei*	*ou*	*y*
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0
b	*d*	*t*	*f*	*l*	*s*	*p*	*k*	*n*	*z*

Here *a* and *b* stand for 1, *e* and *d* for 2, *i* and *t* for 3, and so on.

These letters are assigned arbitrarily to the respective figures, and may very easily be remembered. The first five vowels in order naturally represent 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. The diphthong *au,* being composed of *a* 1 and *u* 5, stands for 6; *oi* for 7, being composed of *o* 4 and *i* 3; *ou* for 9, being composed of *o* 4 and *u* 5. The diphthong *ei* will easily be remembered for *eight,* being the initials of the word. In like manner for the *consonants,* where the initials could conveniently be retained, they are made use of to signify the number; as *t* for *t*hree, *f* for *f*our, *s* for *s*ix and *n* for *n*ine. The rest were assigned without any particular reason, unless that possibly *p* may be more easily remembered for 7 or se*p*tem, *k* for 8 or ὀKτὼ, *d* for 2 or *d*uo, *b* for 1, as being the first consonant, and *l* for 5, being the Roman letter for 50, than any others that could have been put in their places.

The reasons here given, as trifling as they are, may contribute to make the series more readily remembered; and if there was no reason at all assigned, I believe it will be granted that the representation of nine or ten numerical figures by so many letters of the alphabet, can be no great burthen to the memory.

The series, therefore, being perfectly learned, let the reader proceed to exercise himself in the formation and resolution of words in this manner:

10	325	381	1921	1491	1012	536	7987
az	*tel*	*teib*	*aneb*	*afna*	*bybe*	*uts*	*pousoi*
431	553	680	*&c.*				
fib	*lut*	*seiz*	*&c.*				

And as, in numeration of larger sums, it is usual to point the figures at their proper periods of thousands, millions, billions, &c. for the more easy reading of them, as 172,102,795, one hundred and seventy-two millions one hundred and two thousand seven hundred and ninety-five; so, in forming a word for a number consisting of many figures, the syllables may be so conveniently divided, as exactly to answer the end of pointing. Thus, in the instance before us, which is the diameter of the orbit of the earth in English miles, the *technical* word is D-orb-Tér*boid-áze-poul;* the beginning of the word, D-orb-Tér, standing for the diameter of the orbit of the earth (D-iameter ORBitæ TERRæ), and the remaining part of it, *boid-áze-poul,* for the number 172,102,795.

N.B. Always remember that the diphthongs are to be considered but as *one letter,* or rather, as representing only *one figure.* Note also, that *y* is to be pronounced as *w,* for the more easily distinguishing it from *i,* as *syd*=602, pronounce *swid, typ*=307, pronounce *twip.*

The reader will observe, that the same date or number may be signified by different words, according as vowels or consonants are made choice of, to represent the figures or to begin the words with, as,

325 *tel,* or *idu,* 154 *buf,* or *blo,* or *alf,* or *alo,* 93,451 *niola,* or *out-fub,* or *ni-fla,* or *out-olb,* &c.

This variety gives great room for choice, in the formation of words, of such terminations as by their *uncommonness* are most likely to be remembered, or by any *accidental relation* or *allusion* they may have to the thing sought. Thus the year of the world in which Æneas is supposed to have settled in Italy is 2824; but as this may be expressed either by *ekef* or *deido,* I choose rather to join *deido* to Æneas, and make the technical word Æne*deido* than Æn*ekef,* for a reason which I think is obvious. Thus King John began his reign A.D. 199 (one thousand being understood to be added, as I shall show hereafter); but as this may be expressed by *anou,* or *boun,* or *ann,* I make choice of the last, for then it is but calling him J*ann* instead of John, and you have the time almost in his name. Thus Inachus King of Argos began his reign in the year before Christ 1856; with a small variation in the spelling, it is his name In*akus.* More instances of this kind see in page ix. of the Introduction.

. . .

TABLE XXVI.

FATHERS, HERETICS, &c.

	Flourished A. D.
Hermas Pastor—Herm-Past*aul*.	65
Clemens Romanus—Clé-Rom*aul*	65
Ignatius—Igna*bza*	101
Polycarp—Polycar*ázei*.	108
Justin Martyr—Jus-Mar*boz*	140
Irenæus—Ir*asp*	167
Theophilus Antiochenus—Th*ask*	168
Athenagoras—Athn*app*	177
Clemens Alexandrinus—Cl-éx*ane*	192
Tertullian—Tert*and*	192
Minutius F-elix—Min-F*dez*	220
Origen—Or*etz*	230
Gregory Thaumaturgus—Thaum*elf*	254
Cyprian martyred—Cypr*elk*	258
Lactantius—Lactan*tyt*.	303
Arnobius—Arn*tyt*	303
Eusebius Pamphilius—Eu-Pam*tal*	315
Athanasius—Atha*tes*	326
Cyril of J-erusalem—Cyr-J*ilz*	350
Hilary—Hilar*ilf*.	354
Epiphanius—Epiphán*isk*	368
Ephraim Syrus—Eph-Syr*toiz*	370
Basil Magnus—Bas-Mag*toiz*.	370
Gregory Nazianzen—Grego-Naz*toiz*	370
Macarius—Macar*ipt*	373
Ambrose—Ambro*tpo*	374
Jerome—Jerom*toik*	378
Evagrius—Evag*teiz*	380
Rufinus—Ruf*inz*.	390
Austin or Augustin—Aust*ins*.	396
Chrysostom—Chryso*touk*.	398
Cyril of Alexandria—Cyr-Alex*ôbe*	412

Philo Judæus—Phil-Ju*fy*	40
Josephus—Joséph*aup*	67
Aquila—Aqui*bek*.	128
Theodotion—Theodót*apu*	175
Symmachus—Symch*ézb*	201

HERETICS.

Cerinthus—Cerinth*eiz*	80
Papias—Pap*aaz*	110
Basilides—Basili*bbe*.	112
Valentinian—Valent*ady*	120
Marcian—Marc*boz*.	140
Hermogenes—Hermog*apy*	170
Montanus—Mont*âpe*	172
Novatian—Nov*dua*	251
Paulus Samosatanus—Pau-Sam*dauz*	260
Manes—Man*epp*.	277
Arius—Ari*tel* (see page 6).	325
Donatus—Dóna*ten*	329
Eunomius—Eunomi*tauz*	360
Priscillian—Prisci*tpa*	371
Pelagius—Pelagi*ózu*	405

WRITERS AGAINST CHRISTIANITY.

Celsus—Cels*buz*.	150
Hierocles—Hierocl*éze*.	202
Porphyry—Porph*epy*	270
Zosimus—Zos*fel*.	425

The Memorial Lines.

Herm-Past*aul,* Clé-Rom*aul,* Igna*bza,* Polycar*ázei,*
Jus-Mar*boz,* Ir*asp,* Th*ask,* Athn*app,* Cl-éx*ane,* Tert*and,*
Min-F*dez,* Or*etz,* Thaum*elf,* Cypr*elk,* Lactan*tyt* &
Arn*tyt,* Eu-Pam*tal,* Atha*res,* Cyr-J*itz,* Hilar*ilf,*
Epiphán*isk,* Eph-Syr-Bas-Grego*toiz,* Macar*ipt,*
Ambro*tpo,* Jerom*toik,* Evag*teiz,* Ruf*inz,* Aust*ins,*
Chryso*touk,* Cyr-Alex*ôbe.* Phil-Ju*fy,* Joséph*aup,*
Aqui*bek,* Theodót*apu,* Symch*ézb.* Cerinth*eiz,* Pap*aaz,*
Basili*bbe,* Valent*ady,* Marc*boz,* Hermog*apy,* Mont*âape,*
Pau-Sam*dauz,* Nov*dua,* Man*epp,* Dóna*ten,*
Eunomi*tauz,* Prisci*tpa,* Pelagi*ózu.* Cels*buz,*
Hierocl*éze,*———Porph*epy,* Zos*fel.*

From *Memoria Technica*

Jonathan Swift

Anglo-Latin Letter to Dr. Sheridan

[*As the following is the only piece of the kind that perhaps ever was written; we doubt not but the Curious and Polite will find some agreeable entertainment in the perusal of it.*]

Ill us try sigh may Do my nay,

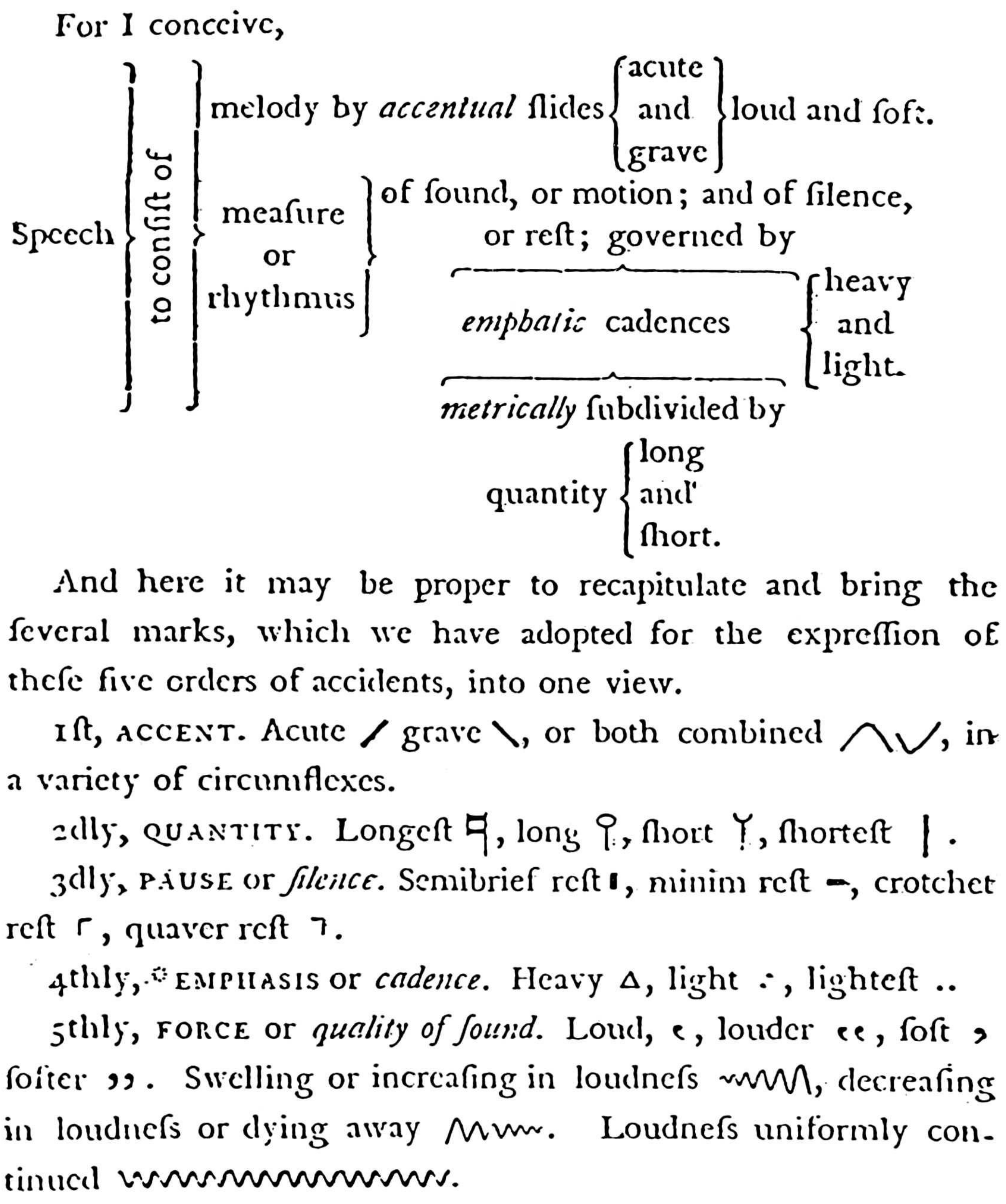
In vain I vye am new pear am descry bend a late in night a tea. Dice ease force an spay row hoc essay a liquid no vye ache a claw dabble is. Tame puss e'er it pose stack come me a fye low so fye a law dabb bitter a tea. East nay ill lay a my cuz vest err it a e'er you dye t'us you teague o some; add sum mum all tear sock rates, aught a wrist I days? Can toe carr-men I am become, here o I come, home e'er I come. Egg o a mow tea; said ease may S^r^ does come add tea meet toe litter as tun on lay jays, nec aw dire veal is? Aw dye vye tea few is sea a man tame you nigh us pew ell lay leap I dice I may, for mow say, said paw pear I may, said dive ease may lye us place sea bitt patt rye vest row.

Codd add raise belly eat pace is at tin net, my high my nigh may like wet, neck raise awe jike as no vye. Sat is east aw dye ray a ball I is. Wrecks bay nay valet, come rage in a eat inn fan tye buss, eat aw lice is, pray sip you ay ake witty ill us try: said hock egg o nigh hill cur o, come paw lull'um may a matt; at egg o ill loss mine us. Feel licks sort tea may ah: Sic dice it whore as I us: In tea jear vye tea seal err risque pur us: I dame vye day, eat set her a. Dumb spy row, spay row. Some hew my lime us do mine ass I own is vest ray.

Vye like us.

P.S. Ray sea pye vest ram ape pist o lamb, quay est a duck inn may buss.

Prosodia Rationalis *(1779)—the second edition of Steele's* Essay Towards Establishing the Melody and Measure of Speech, to be Expressed and Perpetuated by Peculiar Symbols *(1775)—is the most ambitious attempt of its time to establish a notational system for speech on the analogy with music. In his convenient summary, here is Steele's system:*



For I conceive,

Speech } to conſiſt of } melody by *accentual* ſlides { acute and grave } loud and ſoft.
meaſure or rhythmus } of ſound, or motion; and of ſilence, or reſt; governed by
emphatic cadences { heavy and light.
metrically ſubdivided by
quantity { long and ſhort.

And here it may be proper to recapitulate and bring the ſeveral marks, which we have adopted for the expreſſion of theſe five orders of accidents, into one view.

1ſt, ACCENT. Acute / grave \, or both combined /\\/, in a variety of circumflexes.

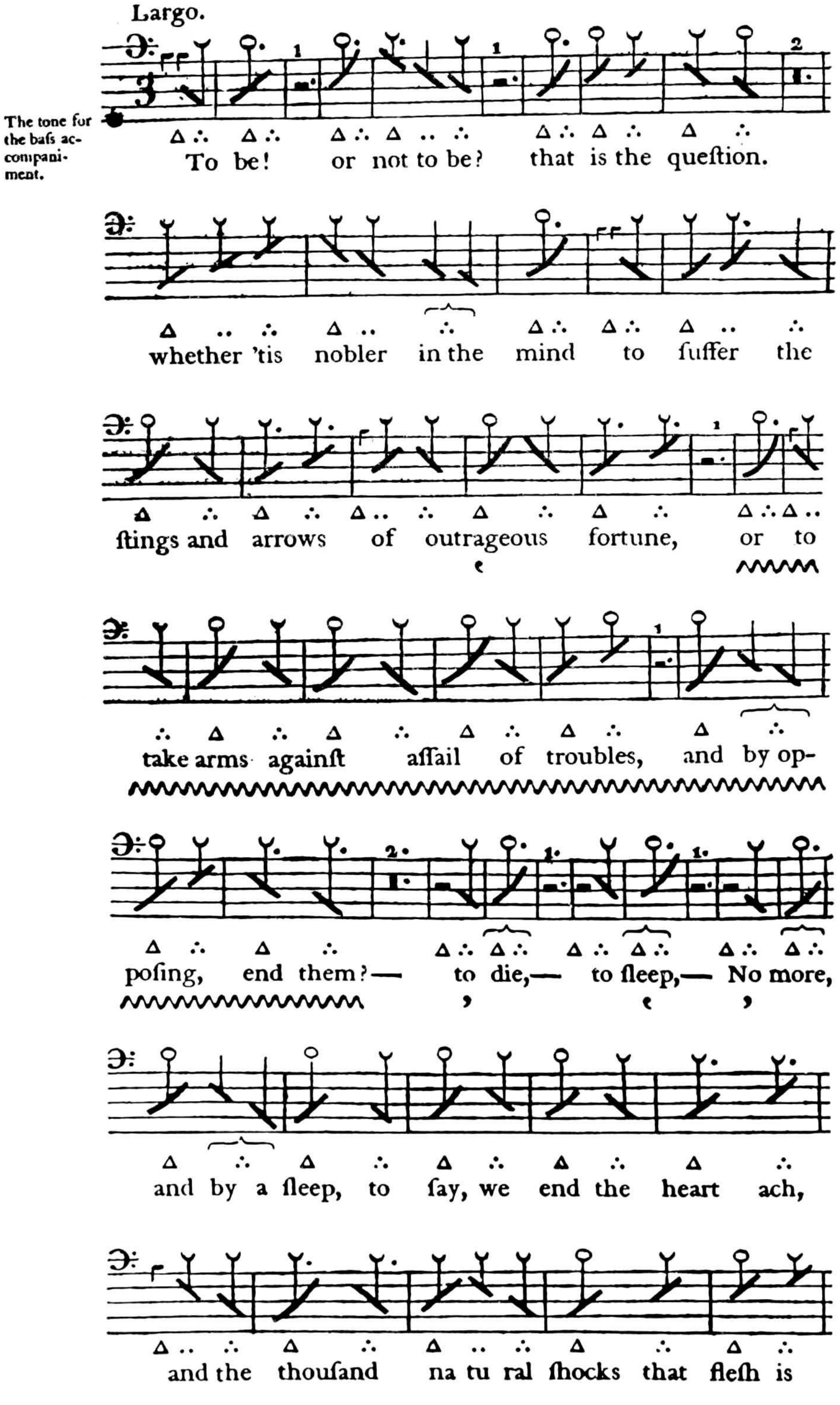
2dly, QUANTITY. Longeſt ꟼ, long ♀, ſhort Y, ſhorteſt | .

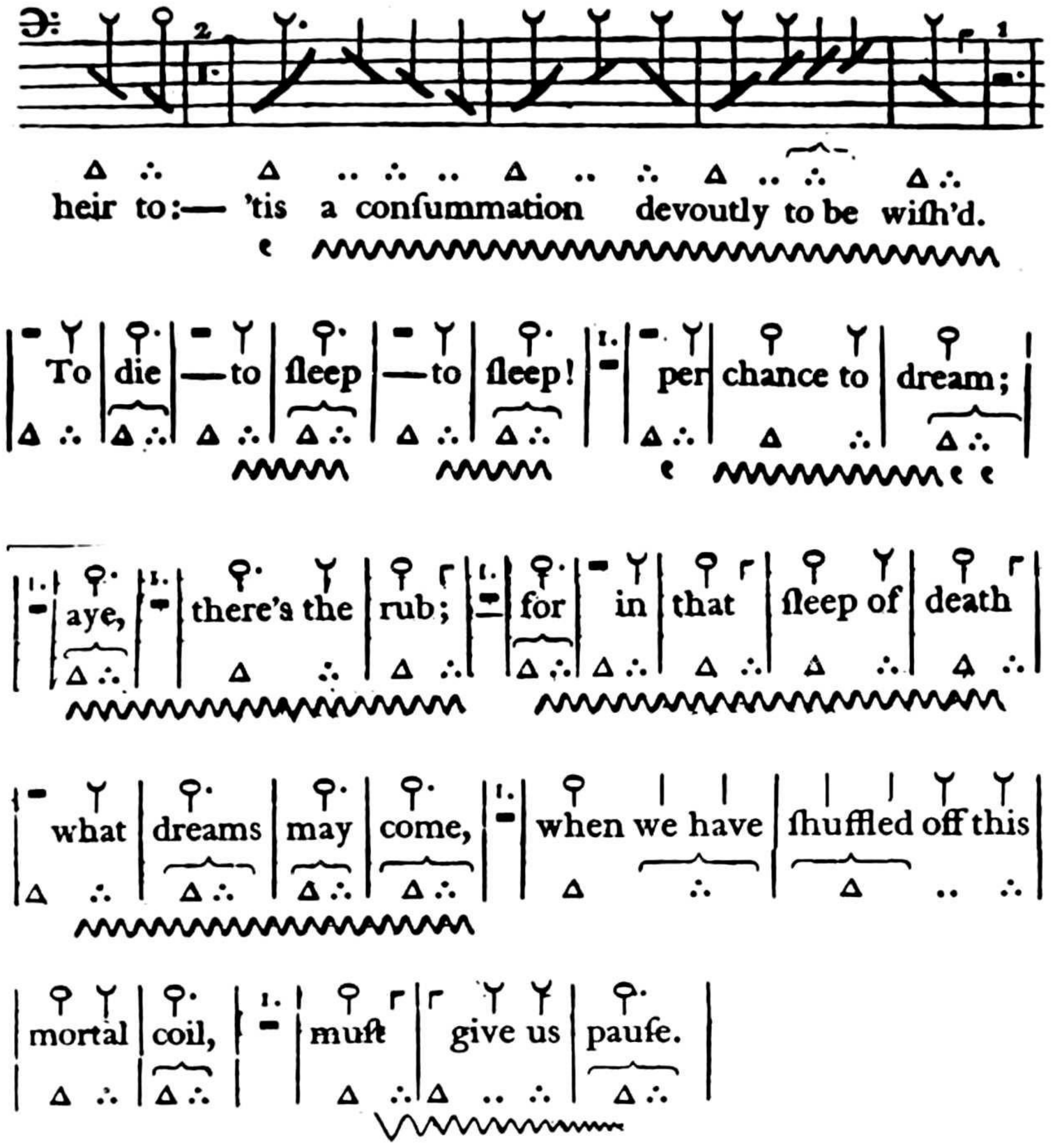
3dly, PAUSE or *ſilence*. Semibrief reſt ▮, minim reſt ▬, crotchet reſt ⌐, quaver reſt ¬.

4thly, EMPHASIS or *cadence*. Heavy △, light ∴, lighteſt ..

5thly, FORCE or *quality of ſound*. Loud, ‹, louder ‹‹, ſoft ›, ſofter ››. Swelling or increaſing in loudneſs ∿∿∧∧, decreaſing in loudneſs or dying away ∧∧∿∿. Loudneſs uniformly continued ∿∿∿∿∿∿∿∿∿∿∿.

Rational Prosody for Hamlet


Largo.
The tone for the baſs accompaniment.
To be! or not to be? that is the queſtion.
whether 'tis nobler in the mind to ſuffer the
ſtings and arrows of outrageous fortune, or to
take arms againſt aſſail of troubles, and by op-
poſing, end them?— to die,— to ſleep,— No more,
and by a ſleep, to ſay, we end the heart ach,
and the thouſand na tu ral ſhocks that fleſh is


heir to:— 'tis a conſummation devoutly to be wiſh'd.
To die —to ſleep —to ſleep! per chance to dream;
aye, there's the rub; for in that ſleep of death
what dreams may come, when we have ſhuffled off this
mortal coil, muſt give us pauſe.

Roland Barthes

Masson's Semiography

From the start, Masson's semiograms, by a kind of unexpected precursion, "take up" in advance the chief propositions of a theory of the text which twenty years ago did not exist and which today constitutes the distinctive sign of the avant-garde: proof that it is the *circulation* of the "arts" (or elsewhere: of the sciences) which produces movement: "painting" here opens the way to "literature," for its seems to have postulated a new object ahead of itself, the Text, which decisively invalidates the separation of the "arts." Masson was fifty-four when he entered his Asiatic (or, as I should prefer to call it, his textural) period; most of our current theoreticians of the Text were just getting born. Here are the textural (and current) propositions already to be found in Masson's painting (I use the word *painting* to simplify matters; it would be better to say *semiography*):

First, Masson deliberately establishes what we call an *inter-text:* the painter circulates between (at least) two texts: on the one hand, his own (let us say: the text of painting, of its practices, its gestures, its instruments), and on the other, that of Chinese ideography (i.e., of a localized culture): as it turns out in any true intertextuality, the Asiatic signs are not inspirational models, "sources," but conductors of graphic energy, distorted citations, identifiable according to line, not letters; what is henceforth displaced is the work's responsibility: it is no longer consecrated by a narrow ownership (that of its immediate creator), it journeys in a cultural space which is open, without limits, without partitions, without hierarchies, where we can recognize pastiche, plagiarism, even imposture—in a word, all forms of the "copy," a practice condemned to disgrace by so-called bourgeois art.

Masson's semiography also tells us this, which is capital in the current theory of the Text: that writing cannot be reduced to a pure function of communication (of *transcription*), as is claimed by the historians of language. Masson's work during this period demonstrates that the identity of written and painted features is not contingent, marginal, baroque (obvious only in calligraphy—a practice, moreover, virtually unknown to our civilization), but somehow persisted in, obsessive, including both the origin and the perpetual present of any *drawn line:* there is a unique practice, extensive to any functionalization, which is that of an undifferentiated "graphism." Thanks to Masson's dazzling demonstration, writing (imagined or real) appears, then, as the very *surplus* of its own function; the painter helps us understand that writing's truth is neither in its messages nor in the system of transmission which it constitutes for current meaning, still less in the psychological expressivity attributed to it by a suspect science, graphology, compromised by certain technocratic interests (expertise, tests), but in the hand which presses down and traces a line, i.e., in *the body which throbs* (which takes pleasure). This is why (Masson's complementary demonstration) color must not be understood as a background against which certain characters "stand out" but rather as pulsion's entire space (we know the pulsional nature of color: witness the scandal caused by the Fauve liberation): in Masson's semiographic work, color provokes the withdrawal of writing from its mercantile, bookkeeping basis (at least this is the origin assigned to our Syrio-Occidental writing). If something is "communicated" in writing (and hence exemplarily in Masson's semiograms), it is not a reckoning, a "reason" (etymologically, this is the same thing), but a desire.

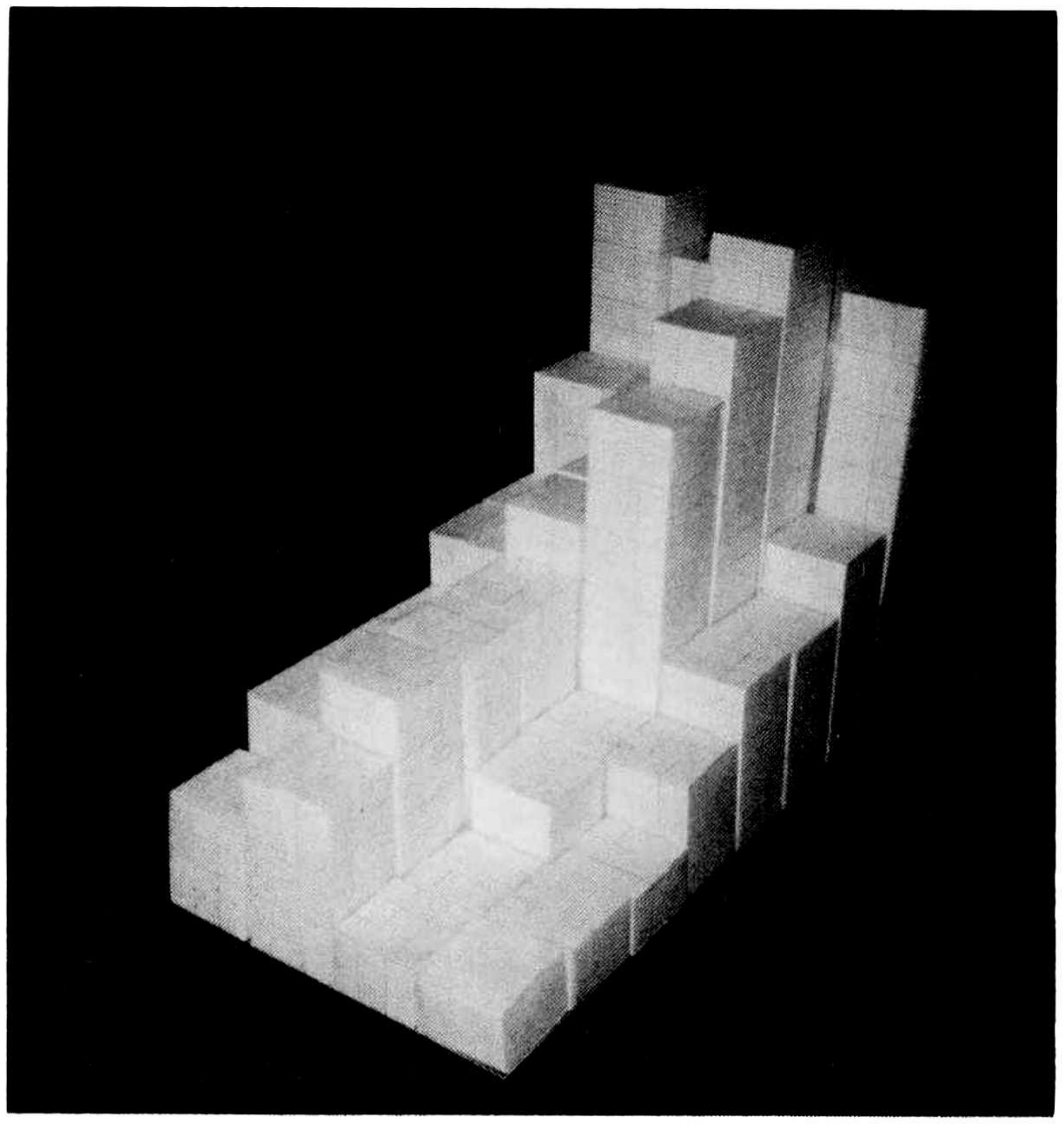
Lastly, by turning (chiefly) to Chinese ideograms, Masson recognizes not only the astonishing beauty of such writing; he also supports the lapse which ideographic characters effect in what we might call the West's scriptory good conscience: are we not proudly convinced our alphabet is the best—the most rational, the most effective? Do not our most rigorous scholars maintain as "self-evident" that the invention of the consonantal alphabet (of the Syrian type) and then of the vocalic alphabet (of the Greek type) were irreversible kinds of progress, conquests of reason and economy over the baroque scribbling of ideographic systems? A fine testimony to that impenitent ethnocentrism which governs our very science! In truth, if we reject the ideogram, it is because we constantly try, in our Occident, to substitute the realm of speech for that of gesture; for reasons which derive from a truly monumental history, it is in our interests to believe, to maintain, to assert scientifically, that writing is but the "transcription" of articulated language: the instrument of an instrument: a chain along whose entire length it is the body which disappears. Masson's semiography, rectifying millennia of scriptorial history, refers us not to origins (what do we care about origins?) but to the body: it imposes upon us not the form (banal proposition of all painters) but the figure, i.e., the elliptical collision of two signifiers: the gesture beneath every ideogram as a kind of evaporated figurative outline, and the gesture of the painter, of the calligrapher, which makes the brush move according to his body. That is what Masson's work tells us: *for writing to be manifest in its truth* (and not in its instrumentality), *it must be illegible:* the semiographer (Masson) knowingly produces, by a sovereign elaboration, the illegible: he detaches writing's pulsion from the image-repertoire of communication (legibility). This is what the Text desires as well. But whereas the written text must still—and ceaselessly—struggle with an apparently signifying substance (words), Masson's semiography, directly resulting from a non-signifying practice (painting), achieves from the start the utopia of the Text.

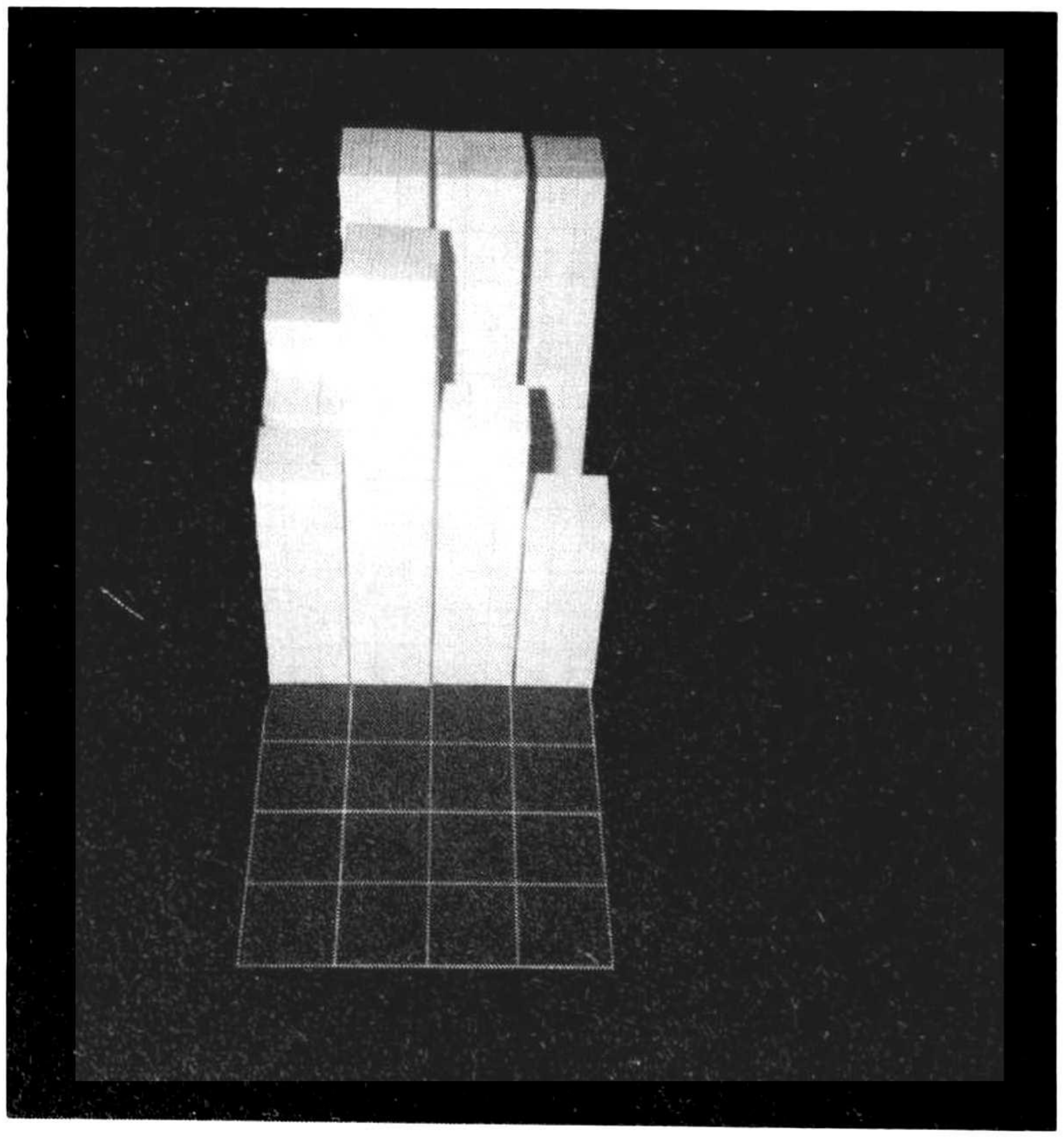
Translated by Richard Howard

Beth Learn

*In the author's note, "*Timeslide *is the third in a series of seven time/sound/language investigations realized via systematic translation of data (mean syllabic value), in one-to-one correspondence to graph paper cubes." The source text for this three-dimensional restructuring consists of the first eight lines of W. B. Yeats's poem "The Second Coming." Learn started her investigations into the multidimensional reality of language field theory in 1974 under the name of* learn/yeats & co. *Describing her work as "Contexturalism," she has subjected the poem to systematic reconstruction via a gamut of scientific concepts, imaging techniques, and metalanguages including astrophysics, molecular cell biology, particle physics, virology, and mathematics.*

Timeslide





Ernst Jandl

Born in 1925 in Vienna, Jandl began his linguistic experiments in 1956 as a conscious protest against traditional modes of composition. "Disregard of the conventions of language," he writes, "was rewarded by the discovery of new ways of making grotesque poems, many of which were meant to be spoken rather than read quietly." His books include laut und luise *(1966),* sprechblasen *(1968),* der künstliche baum *(1972),* serienfuss *(1974), and* für alle *(1974).*

Three Visual Lip-Poems

these poems are dedicated
to the mustache of daniel jones
the great english phonetician

the visual lip-poem is the reversal of the paper-poem. the reciter is the paper of the visual lip-poem. the visual lip-poem is not spoken out loud. it is written in the air with the lips. the untrained reader speaks the visual lip-poem before a mirror. for the untrained reader it's enough to move the mouth in order for the visual impression of the poem to arise. whoever knows visual lip-poems by heart will never be entirely blind. the visual lip-poem holds deafness, muteness, and deaf-muteness in arrest. only those born blind are beyond its reach.

1

ö i u a
ö i u a
ö i u a
ö
i——i
u
a
a
a

2

m
w
m
w
m
w
o
m

3

a
ba
a
ba
f
i
ba
bi
ab

Translated by Jed Rasula

Method

Transpositions are basic in spoken language, like the minimal pairs dig/dog, pick/peck, concepts distinguished by just a phoneme. Writing introduces an additional class of minima, like peek/peak, or sight/cite. To accord more than arbitrary significance to such cases is to approach the domain of alphabetic numerology. Tulips are honored in Muslim art, for example, because the numerical value of the word "tulip" is equivalent to Allah. *Outside such devotional considerations, there is a certain enchantment to the playful indulgence in transpositional principles. The Surrealist game "Exquisite Corpse" was a method of generating poems by drawing words or phrases from a hat. The notion of unconscious desire or even gratuitous accident may prevail here, but the consequent text is as inscrutable in its own way as the divine will expressed in the enigmatic parables of scripture. A spectrum of transpositions, from the ludicrous to the sublime, is illustrated in this section; but the texts require a foreground.*

Raymond Roussel's novels Locus Solus *and* Impressions of Africa *were generated by what he called the "evolutionary method." This could work by playing off homophonic coincidences, of which French has a plentiful supply, as in these phrases: "Les lettres du blanc sur les bandes du vieux billard" (The white letters on the cushions of the old billiard table) and "Les lettres du blanc sur les bandes du vieux pillard" (The white man's letters on the hordes of the old plunderer).*[1] *"The two phrases found," Roussel says, "it was a case of writing a story which could begin with the first and end with the second." This procedure was employed with sentences, phrases, and even words as framing devices for narrative—the narrative being in effect an immense interpolation between homophones. "I used anything at hand," Roussel admits. "I even utilized the name and address of my shoemaker." As he recognized, his "evolutionary method" was not dissimilar to the formal constraint of rhyme in poetry. "In both cases there is unforeseen creation due to phonic combinations." Commenting on Roussel's method, Garrett Stewart says, "The idea is not to generate a set of discrete puns but to pun on the very failure of discreteness in language, to capitalize on the verbal penumbra that hedges round every supposed integral vocalization, a phantom trace at once evoked and revoked." Or, more pungently put by Irving Massey, Roussel's procedure is like "feeding passion fruit to robots."*

Roussel's practice hovers between incitement and constraint. The group Oulipo in France has devoted itself since 1960 to the invention, (re)discovery, and exploration of formal constraints for generating texts. Among the most famous are Italo Calvino's If on a Winter's Night a Traveler *(a novel that begins over and over again), Georges Perec's* La Disparition *(a novel about a disappearance, which subtly acts out its theme by avoiding the use of the letter "e"—a considerable achievement, given the frequency of that letter in French),*[2] *and Raymond Queneau's* Cent mille millards de poèmes. *Queneau's poem (the title means "a hundred thousand billion poems") incarnates the dream of Oulipo,* which one historian describes as "a crusade for the maximal motivation of the literary sign." The mathematical inclinations of Oulipo, along with Queneau's poem(s), should not be construed as pursuing a merely quantitative motivation of the sign. Queneau's poem obviously exceeds the capacity of potential readers, reminding us that the "po" of Oulipo stands for potentielle—a condition permanently assigned by Queneau to his book by virtue of its dexterous combinatorial. Ten sonnets are printed like a sheaf of fortune cookie leafs each of which contains a line; the reader sifts these leaves to arrive at new poems. The number of possible combinations given (ten to the fourteenth power) is indicated by the title. Queneau estimates a million centuries of reading—and, important to add, it is readable, not a random permutation of unintelligible phrases. "Queneau's patent guarantees, in addition to the conservation of the rhyme (which is not at all extraordinary), [are] the conservation of syntactic coherence . . . [and] the conservation of a semantic atmosphere." The prodigious labors of Oulipo are not meant to balk reading but to place it firmly against a cosmic (or computationally stupefying) panorama. In their repudiation of the aleatory, Oulipians also reveal themselves to be fairly traditional, even organicist, in orientation. One member, Jean Lescure, affirms that "what the Oulipo intended to demonstrate was that these constraints are felicitous, generous, and are in fact literature itself."

Queneau's poem is not unique in literary history, nor is it even the most mathematically audacious. Jules-César Scaliger, in Poetices libri septem (1581), declared the advent of "protean verse," which was to prove especially popular in the seventeenth century. An aesthetic of combinatorial exhibitionism, this metamorphic technique is notable for its abandonment of the traditional poetic premise of inspiration by the Muses, favoring chance and method instead. Juan Caramuel de Lobkowitz was the most prodigious among Proteans, proposing in one case a machine capable of generating 9,644,177,432,715,608 quatrains, and another capable of precipitating twenty million billion potential outcomes. In his afterword to Queneau's Cent mille millards de poèmes, François Le Lionnais cites another seventeenth-century example, Georg Philipp Harsdorffer, who penned a couplet permitting 39,916,800 combinations: "Ehr, Kunst, Geld, Guth, Lob, Waib und Kind, / Man hat, sucht, fehlt, hofft, und verschwind" (Honor, art, money, goods, love, wife, and child, / One has, seeks, misses, hopes, and loses).

The intersection of combinatorial with stylistics in Poe's "X-ing a Paragrab" (described in the preface to "Fictive Encounters," p. 156 above) nicely evokes the humor germane to those who adopt technical constraints, like the Oulipians. Our selections from Brown, Phillips, Melnick, and Mac Low all contribute to the good cheer that pervades this section. Much of the levity derives not from any posture of irreverence but from a bemused recognition that language may be delightfully productive with only minimal management. Bob Brown's "Gems," for instance, enact the commonplace that censorship heightens rather than dispells the prurient imagination. Tom Phillips's "treated" novel, A Human Document—truncated by erasure and overpainting to A Humument—discloses a salacious subtext unintended by its original Victorian author. By way of homophonic translation, David Melnick un-

covers a homosexual pandemic riotously lurking in the very sound shape of Homer's Iliad, *as if to demonstrate Gérard Genette's suggestion that "one who really loves texts must wish from time to time to love (at least) two together." And Jackson Mac Low's scrupulous minimalism in "Winds/Instruments"—in which the letters spelling the name of a musical instrument supply the raw material for the recombinant text—generates narrative and thematic arcs that seem to defy all odds, like an adept contortionist's performance.*

There is also a different side to these procedural phantasms. The slapstick spectacle of language outwitting its users is offset in some instances by a vision of language emanating from the atomic structure of creation itself. Caramuel's diagrams commonly have Christian themes, and he clearly saw a devotional potential for the combinatorial method. Likewise, Ronald Johnson's Radi Os *is a cosmic readjustment of the monologic universe given in Milton's* Paradise Lost. *Johnson enacts Blake's "printing in the infernal method, by corrosives, which in Hell are salutary and medicinal, melting apparent surfaces away, and displaying the infinite which was hid"—purging Milton's poem of the linguistic detritus and semantic impediments to a vision of the infinite.* "Radi Os *etches away, purifies* Paradise Lost," *as Eric Selinger puts it, distinguishing Johnson's practice from the chance operations of John Cage. "His method is not aleatoric but apocalyptic." The apocalyptic day of judgment can be felt as a sobering portent of the blank spaces that are all that remains of most of Milton's poem. At the same time there is a redemptive aura around the surviving words.*

The balance of concealment and revelation that blank spaces evoke has a substantial history in the development of modernism (not to mention its political uses in cryptography, as in Cardinal Richelieu's grille cipher). In Mallarmé's Un coup de dés *the black letters unfold over the blank page, while the very introduction of these letters awakens the blankness to a responsive proportionate independence, rendering the text a compromise between an initial writing of black on white and a supplementary inscription of white reclaiming its primordial dominance. The blankness of the page is revealed as profound potentiality only by the delimiting specter of those words which happen to appear on it—words which seem less a fulfillment and destiny than a gratuitous forfeiture of freedom. As for the blank: "Blanks represent hiatus, not void, a secret source in nature mated to a waiting hollow in the mind."*[3]

Paralleling the interplay of sign and blank is that of speech and silence, a topic in which religious preoccupations are latent. Swiss philosopher Max Picard, bemoaning the "asphalt commonplaces" that populate modern speech with chatter, felt that language had been detached from its sacral bond with silence, leaving language "unprotected . . . full of cracks and pervious to everything." Edmond Jabès elaborates a Hebraic legacy, discerning in silence the enigmatic triangulation of God, the chosen people, and the book:

> Some claim that the first word was all the Hebrew people understood of the divine Book; others, that it was only the first letter.

Moses alone could reveal whole sentences, whole pages.

The Hebrew people read the book of Moses as we would read a book of which we have only extracts.

The entire book once transmitted, Moses fell silent.

In this silence, the Jews recognized their God.

In Jabès's parable, silence is the inscrutable gift, an incentive for the faithful to recognize in language a compulsion to kenosis *or self-emptying. "A sound—uttered by whom?—and then nothing./A word—written by whom?—and then a blank./Listen to the nothing. Read the blank."* Reading *the blank is the mystery enacted in many of the works chosen for inclusion here, in which the reciprocity of text and blankness becomes the animated inauguration of a new cosmology—the complex synesthesia of Jabès' aphorism: "'It is because all of God's gestures are silent that they are written,' taught a sage." "Rather than to sense," Jabès recommends, "hold on to the silence which has formed the word."*

Whether conceived of as silence or as blank, the substratum of the word is an etheric continuum, an enveloping fabric, interstellar expanse. In its need to traverse time and space, translation is the activity that makes a practice of spanning the blank and the intermediary distances of silence. Translation is also an art that puts languages in contest, exposing one language to predation from another. An innovative response to this conundrum is the homophonic translation of Catullus pioneered by Louis and Celia Zukofsky. Here is poem 86 in Latin, with the Zukofsky version interpolated so you can see as well as hear how closely the English line is made to conform with the Latin phonetic and graphic pattern:

Quintia formosast multis; mihi candida, longa,
Quintia's *foremost* to multitudes; my eye can deed her *long, e-*
   rectast. haec ego sic singula confiteor,
   rect, honest. I can go seek, single out, con, feat her
totum illud formosa nego: nam nulla venustas,
total—allow *foremost?* ah no go: nominal Venus tastes
   nulla in tam magnost corpore mica salis.
   no life in that mighty gust, corporeal missing salts.
Lesbia formosast, quae cum pulcherrima totast,
Lesbia's foremost, to quicken, pall care, a mate to taste,
   tum omnibus una omnis surripuit Veneres.
   whom all woman as one woman's sure repute venerates.

The marvel of the homophonic translation is that so many of the poem's "meanings" are retained, which here results in part from the Latinate influence on English vocabulary.[4] *What is added is the element of chance. To rely on trace elements of the Latin retaining semantic sense in English is to subject the* *translation to an aleatory adventure. The statistical persistence of the semantic content of Catullus's poem is higher for English than it would be for Japanese.*[5] *Even so, a homophonic translation of Catullus into Japanese would statistically generate a certain proportion of intelligible segments.*

Homophony is a precarious medium for semantic transfer between languages. Homophony contests the ease of semantic equivalency, revealing that the plenitude of one signifying code is obtained at the expense of another.[6] *A(n im)pertinent spoof of homophonic risk is Van Rooten's* Mots d'Heures: Gousses, Rames *(Mother Goose's Rhymes), purporting to be a collection of eighteenth-century verse of unknown authorship. Forty poems are assiduously annotated by an "editor" oblivious to the homophonic subtext, as in the opening poem which cleverly conceals Humpty Dumpty as "Un petit d'un petit."*[7] *Homophony reveals the problem of translation to be pervasive in all institutions of comparison and evaluation. It is a problem of the signifying series as such, based on distinctions between signal and noise, signifier and signified, or semantic source and its translation. Gilles Deleuze sums up the paradox: "two series being given, one signifying and the other signified, the first presents an excess and the latter a lack. By means of this excess and this lack, the series refer to each other in eternal disequilibrium and in perpetual displacement."*

Walter Benjamin speaks of translation as "removal from one language into another through a continuum of transformations. Translation passes through continua of transformation, not abstract areas of identity and similarity." There is never something "lost" in translation without something else being found. *We are impaired only by our dream of identity, the futile wish for all languages to attain a central equivalence, a balanced correspondence. But language in any use is a hatchery: "language is an egg on the road to differentiation." When one language confronts or addresses another, we are exposed to a particular world paradigm that each language assumes. The discrepancy gives rise to, and nourishes, not just different languages but different worlds. In G. Spencer Brown's exposition* Laws of Form, *a mark entered into the space of an equation produces a world (see "Clinamen," p. 549 below). Or, to put it another way, "world" is what emanates from the line or cut, the bifurcation of the blank into opposing components (symmetrical* or *asymmetrical). The presence of the mark endows the blank with expectancy, like the "pregnant silence" of a conversation.*

Translation needn't entail semantic transference from one language to another. Not only do we have homophonic versions, but the function of synonyms, and of rhetorical tropes, is to "translate" a given language into its own native difference (that "internal difference,/ Where the Meanings, are" in Emily Dickinson's words). Benjamin concedes that "all translation is only a somewhat provisional way of coming to terms with the foreignness of languages." The exfoliating propensity of language as such renders any particular language internally discrepant, but contrapuntal with respect to other languages. Innate semiotic pregnance extends even to the blank of erasure: "subtraction leaves a mark of erasure, a remainder *which is added to the subsequent text and which cannot be completely summed up within it." The materiality of a text impinges on, and mingles with, the message. Three decades after McLuhan's declaration that the medium is the message, there is still concern about the reconfigu-*

ration of language by its accommodation to binary digits and the lapse of the fulsome integrity of the physical book. At issue is the signifier's materiality. If the book is not just the words on the page but the page itself, the typographic design and layout and other material supports, what countersignification is put into play by the regime of computational electronic texts?

The machinic hypothesis, by which human nature is parceled out among surrogate actors and prosthetic extensions, has most recently embraced the computational lexia of personal computers, the software for which has attracted users by engaging their textual and iconic predispositions. In the dystopic scenarios of Polish science fiction writer Stanislaw Lem, machines are so sophisticated in their computational elegance, and so seamlessly acculturated to language, that they doubt whether their human interlocutors actually possess consciousness or are merely epiphenomena of the protocol code. In a story spoofing the history of "bitistics"—or literature written by nonhumans—Lem elaborates a theory of machinic mimesis in which a given (human) author's work "develops into a curved mass, recalling in its overall structure an open torus, that is, a 'broken ring' (with a gap). Thus it was a relatively simple task (for machines, of course, not for people!) to close that gap, inserting the missing link," simply by fulfilling the probabilities of the "semantic gradient" latent in the author's oeuvre. *The problem, of course, is that "for this literature, which has taken nothing from us apart from language, humanity appears not to exist."*

If computational magnitude of this order threatens to dispose of humans altogether, earlier satirists focused more on the selective eradication of particular human faculties. Jonathan Swift's vision of a compositional apparatus lampoons the Royal Society's aspirations to universal language; and the accompanying illustration derives from the hieroglyphic incentive to seventeenth-century linguistic speculation.[8] *Swift was writing prior to the industrial revolution, which is to say before the naturalization of technical reason, which has long since provided operational decisions for us as a "common sense." Michael Heim's warning about the informational bias of systems rhetoric is worth heeding: "The system of natural language expressions ideally yields a stable network of logical relations, universal predicates, indexical terms, and existential referents. Such a theory of meaningful form neglects the intrinsic opacity of reality, which is to say, the theory understands form in a way that does not allow for the inherently elusive nature of formulation on which every form is based and to which it must return for intelligibility."*

Despite such concerns, computers are now producing "literature." The first and most famous of such programs is Racter. A typical passage: "Benton and Diane broaden their hungry love. Their passion is hungry because foxes and crows are spooky appearances in their interesting expectations. Interesting! But an expectation is a reflection of passion as a contract is an image of an agreement." The novelty of Racter's output is initially engaging, but the formulaic appeal soon grows as irritating as kitsch: "Enthralling!" and "Interesting!" function in the text like the laugh track in a TV sitcom. Josef Ernst accuses Racter of being a "reactionary art form," its technofetishism "ostraciz[ing] one individual from another as well as from their interests in communication, which are rendered obsolete in an overall *noncommunication environment." Communications systems subordinate the human to technical obligations of the operating protocol, in which "the kind of communication which 'informs' man uniformly," as Heidegger puts it, "gives him the form in which he is fitted into the technological-calculative universe."*[9]

There is an enticing if superficial resemblance between the minimalist vocabulary and prosodic flow of Racter and the work of Gertrude Stein, but the distinction is decisive: "Her texts equivocate not between sense and nonsense, as has been claimed, but between two kinds of meaning, the fertile chaos of undirected language and the vectors of human intent." Stein engages the objectivizing impulse of unilateral communication and subjects it to a continually self-faceting recomposition. If anything, Stein's writing achieves its singularity not by being mechanistic but by cleaving to the organic rhythm of perceptual awareness, and in the process divulging the extent to which thought and awareness have been acclimatized to the logic of print culture. The conventional use of punctuation is like an elaborate highway system for trafficking in concepts. When the pause, stop, go, and other punctuation signals are removed, as in Stein, an entire preordained network of conceptual routes is dissolved. To read Stein is to begin all over again, relearning that most difficult of cognitive tasks, which is to think in print. *Stein's work very usefully confronts us with the perennial problem of communications systems (both mechanistic and organic), which is equivocation.*

A plenitude of signification oversaturates and ends up blanking out the very space of the cornucopia, the Eden of meaning. Too much meaning becomes meaningless; the sated craving reverts to torpor, indifference, ennui. It is not for everyone that, as in the pansemiosis of Giordano Bruno, "every object exists not only in itself, but as a possible sign, deferral, image, emblem, hieroglyph of something else." Henry James's tale of a young woman who works "in the cage" handling telegrams poignantly profiles the vertigo of signification at the crossroads of communication technologies (in this case the conjuction of writing and telegraphy). Profundity rests precariously on a tide of superficialities: this is one reading of a social equation pervasive in James. But "In the Cage" extends this to the everyday transactions of modern communications technologies and their programming languages—payment by the letter in telegrams, by the word in commercial fiction, and binary digits and electronic signals used in computers. But all along the semiotic continuum is the conundrum that, as James puts it, "everything, so far as they chose to consider it so, might mean almost anything."[10]

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1 Marcel Bénabou and Georges Perec subject these two phrases of Roussel's to further permutations in "L.S.D. Analytique."

2 Perec's disappearing "e" is frequently cited as a quintessential Oulipian concept; but Perec himself documents as predecessor Ernest Vincent Wright's 1939 publication *Gadsby: A Story of over 50,000 Words without Using the Letter E.*

3 In Garrett Stewart's theory of the "phonotext," the blank is a contributing element to what he calls "transegmental drift"—the process whereby phonemes are swapped from word to word in accidents and deviance, and "signifying falls between the cracks of wording. . . . The blanks that make wording possible are processed instead as a sequential mirage that dissipates into new mergers."

4 Another poet (Peter Wigham)'s version: "We have heard of Quintia's beauty. To me she is tall, slender / and of a white 'beauty'. Such things I freely admit; / but such things do not constitute beauty. / In her there is nothing of Venus, / not a pinch of love spice in her long body. / White Lesbia, Lesbia is loveliness indeed. / Herself of particular beauty / has she not plundered womanhead of all its graces, / flaunting them as her adornment?"

5 Likewise, the homophonic ratio of semantic transfer from German to English works to his advantage in Ernst Jandl's "Superficial Translation" ("Oberflächenübersetzung") of Wordsworth's "The Rainbow," which begins "Mai hart lieb zapfen eibe hold." The famous concluding lines (used as epigraph to "Ode on Intimations of Immortality") transpose to "seht steil dies fader rosse mähen / in teig kurt wisch mai desto bier / baum deutsche deutsch bajonett schur alp eiertier."

6 In *Beyond Translation* A. L. Becker memorably makes this point in an essay about his abortive attempt to translate Ralph Waldo Emerson into Old Javanese. In the end, translation is never adequately located at the level of words but of cultural particularities.

7 The complete poem: "Un petit d'un petit / S'étonne aux Halles / Un petit d'un petit / Ah! degrés te fallent / Indolent qui ne sort cesse / Indolent qui ne se mène / Qu'importe un petit d'un petit / Tout Gai de Reguennes." Omitted here are the six footnotes (the one following the first line reads, for example, "The inevitable result of a child marriage").

8 Elsewhere, in *Discourse Concerning the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit,* Swift derides the mechanist mentality in his satirical depiction of the brain as "only a Crowd of little Animals, but with Teeth and Claws extremely sharp," who cling together "like Bees in perpendicular swarm upon a Tree. . . . All invention is formed by the Morsure of two or more of these Animals, upon certain capillary Nerves. . . . If the Morsure be Hexagonal, it produces Poetry; the Circular gives Eloquence; If the Bite hath been Conical, the Person, whose Nerve is so affected, shall be disposed to write upon the Politicks." Swift's combinatorial machine is revisited in the libidinal precincts of Angela Carter's novel *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman,* where a blind man's sack of miniature figures and emblems magically assumes the "symbolic constituents of representations of the basic constituents of the universe. If they are properly arranged, all the possible situations in the world and every possible mutation of those situations can be represented." We recognize here the familiar lineaments of the universal language scheme; but Carter understands that such an ambitious nomenclature is actually "a bouquet of ferocious images of desire." The incognito magus of the story elaborates the three principles of "Phenomenal Dynamics" accordingly: "'The universe has no

fixed substratum of fixed substances and its only reality lies in its phenomena.' . . . 'Only change is invariable.' . . . 'The difference between a symbol and an object is quantitative, not qualitative.'"

9 The techno-apparatus of "enhanced" communications ultimately demands a cyborg as optimal interface between body and machine. See Kittler for a survey of the conversion of physiology to systems engineering, particularly in the erosion of "Gutenberg's storage monopoly" (the book) by photography, film, and database: human "essence runs through apparatuses [as] machines conquer functions of the central nervous system."

10 Floyd Merrell cites Nelson Goodman as "argu[ing] convincingly that anything can resemble anything else in myriad ways, given the confounding range of possible contexts, and just as for Peirce (CP, 2.247), anything, 'be it a quality, existent individual, or a law, is an icon of anything, in so far as it is like that thing and is used as a sign of it,' so also the inverse can hold: anything can differ from anything else—even from itself, with time—and from some possible perspective it can always be contrasted with something else." A comparable principle underlies Lettrisme: "Isou has implicitly proposed to form any sign out of any other sign," writes Jean-Paul Curtay. Umberto Eco resists these intimations of pansemiosis by noting a peculiar resemblance between medieval scholasticism and modern hermeticism (deconstruction and other celebrations of interpretive slippage). "It is interesting that, being so radically different from Christian symbolism, modern symbolism obeys the same semiotic laws. In one case, one assumes that symbols do have a final meaning, but since it is the same everlasting message, there is an inexhaustible variety of signifiers for a unique signified. In the other case, symbols have any possible meaning because of the inner contradictoriness of reality, but since every symbol speaks about this fundamental contradictoriness, an inexhaustible quantity of signifiers always stand for their unique signified, the inexhaustibility of the senses of any text. One witnesses in both cases a form of 'fundamentalism.' In the former case, every text speaks of the rational and univocal discourse of God; in the latter, every text speaks of the irrational and ambiguous discourse of Hermes."

Jonathan Swift

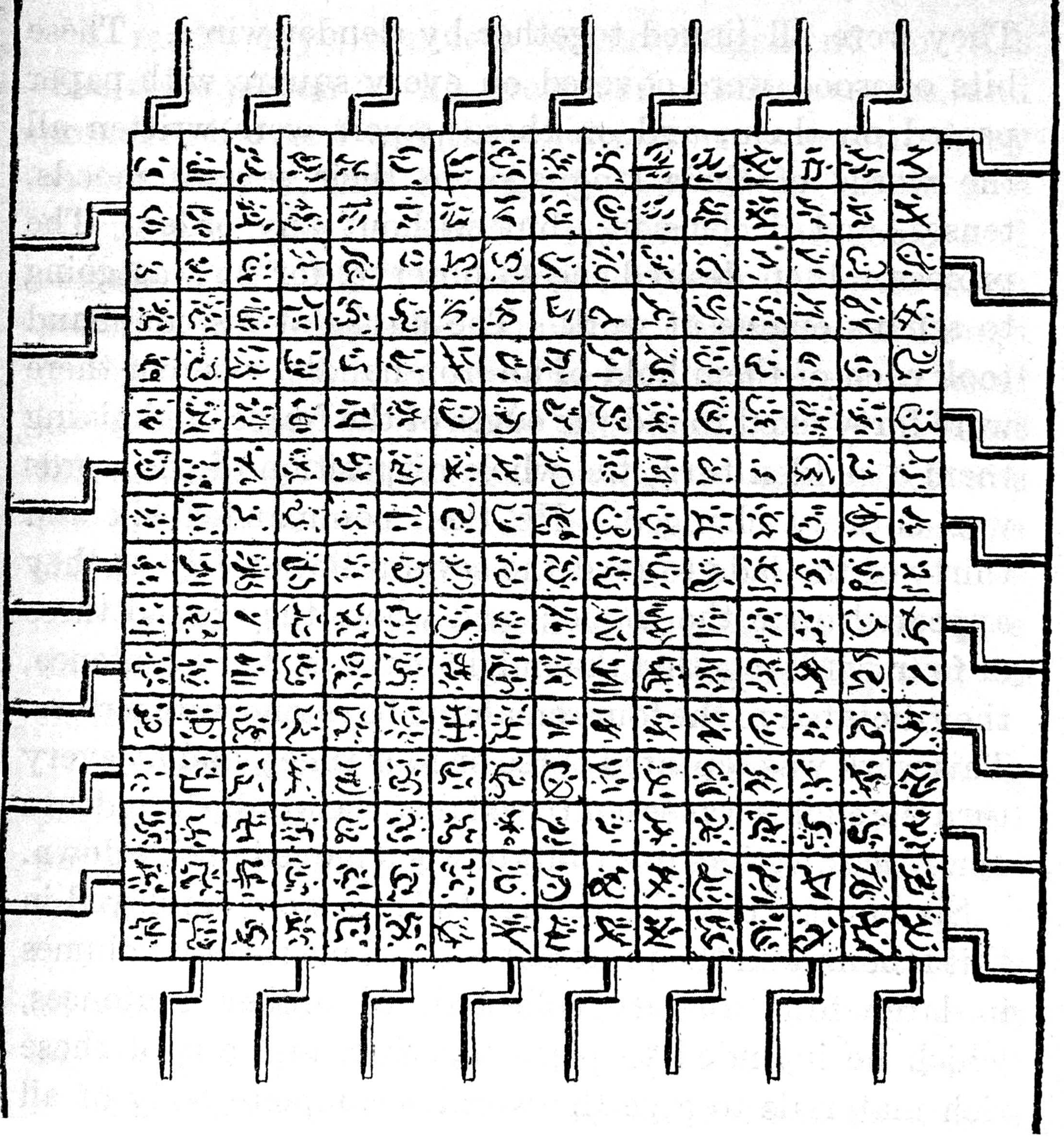
A Project for Improving Speculative Knowledge

The first Professor I saw was in a very large Room, with forty Pupils about him. After Salutation, observing me to look earnestly upon a Frame, which took up the greatest part of both the Length and Breadth of the Room, he said perhaps I might wonder to see him employed in a Project for improving speculative Knowledge by practical and mechanical Operations. But the World would soon be sensible of its Usefulness, he flattered himself that a more noble exalted Thought never sprung in any other Man's Head. Every one knew how laborious the usual Method is of attaining to Arts and Sciences; whereas by his Contrivance, the most ignorant Person at a reasonable Charge, and with a little bodily Labour, may write both in Philosophy, Poetry, Politicks, Law, Mathematicks and Theology, without the least Assistance from Genius or Study. He then led me to the Frame, about the sides whereof all his Pupils stood in Ranks. It was twenty Foot Square, placed in the middle of the Room. The Superficies was composed of several bits of Wood, about the bigness of a Dye, but some larger than others. They were all linked together by slender Wires. These bits of Wood were covered on every Square with Paper pasted on them, and on these Papers were written all the Words of their Language in their several Moods, Tenses, and Declensions, but without any Order. The Professor then desired me to observe, for he was going to set his Engine at Work. The Pupils at his Command took each of them hold of an Iron Handle, whereof there were fourty fixed round the Edges of the Frame, and giving them a sudden turn, the whole Disposition of the Words was entirely changed. He then commanded six and thirty of the Lads to read the several Lines softly as they appeared upon the Frame; and where they found three or four Words together that might make part of a Sentence, they dictated to the four remaining Boys who were Scribes. This Work was repeated three or four times, and at every turn the Engine was so contrived, that the Words shifted into new places, or the square bits of Wood moved upside down.

Six Hours a-day the young Students were employed in this Labour, and the Professor shewed me several Volumes in large Folio already collected, of broken Sentences, which he intended to piece together, and out of those rich Materials to give the World a compleat Body of all Arts and Sciences; which however might be still improved, and much expedited, if the Publick would raise a Fund for making and employing five hundred such Frames in *Lagado,* and oblige the Managers to contribute in common their several Collections.

Plate.V.Part.III.

Page.74



Marcel Duchamp

One of the most famous artworks of the twentieth century is The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even *(also known as* The Large Glass*), which Duchamp abandoned in 1923 after eight years of work. In its place, Duchamp published a box of notes, affirming that the matrix of ideas was more important than their visual realization. In fact, for nearly half a century he held a unique position as one of the premiere artists of his time while pointedly producing no artworks, his preferred media being verbal—the (untranslatable) pun, the pronouncement, and the interview. André Breton celebrated Duchamp's integrity in passing* "through the artistic looking-glass," *recognizing that his antecedents were not painters but writers like Charles Fourier, Sigmund Freud, Alfred Jarry, Raymond Roussel, and Jean-Pierre Brisset (whose work appears here in "Retentions and Secretions," p. 493). As Octavio Paz observes, the* Large Glass *shares with Mallarmé's* Un coup de dés *the principle of negation as "their motor, their animating principle": "the poem and the painting affirm simultaneously the absence of meaning and the necessity of meaning, and it is here that the meaning of both works resides."*

Conditions of a Language

The search for "*prime words*" ("divisible" only by themselves and by unity).

Take a Larousse dict. and copy all the so-called "abstract" words, i.e., those which have no concrete reference.

Compose a schematic sign designating each of these words. (this sign can be composed with the standard stops)

These signs must be thought of as the letters of the new alphabet.

A grouping of several signs will determine

(utilize colors—in order to differentiate what would correspond in this [literature] to the substantive, verb, adverb declensions, conjugations etc.)

Necessity for *ideal continuity,* i.e.: each grouping will be connected with the other groupings by a *strict meaning* (a sort of grammar, no longer requiring a pedagogical sentence construction. But, apart from the differences of languages, and the "figures of speech" peculiar to each language—; weighs and measures some *abstractions* of *substantives, of negatives,* of relations of subject to verb, etc. by means of standard signs. (representing these new relations: conjugations, declensions, plural and singular, adjectivation inexpressible by the *concrete alphabetic* forms of languages living now and to come.

This alphabet very probably is only suitable for the description of this picture.

Translated by George Heard Hamilton

Juan Caramuel de Lobkowitz

Typical of Caramuel's combinatorial passion is an example he gives in Metametrica *(1663) in which he produces 140 variations on the declaration "Io Caramuel." The first five and the final two are:*

1. Iste Omnem Cuique Ad Rem, Aut Multis Utilis Est Lux.
2. Iste Omnem Cuique Aut Rem Ad Multis Utilis Est Lux.
3. Iste Omnem Rem Ad Cuique Aut Multis Utilis Est Lux.
4. Iste Omnem Rem Aut Cuique Ad Multis Utilis Est Lux.
5. Iste Omnem Ad Rem Cuique Aut Multis Utilis Est Lux.

139. Rem Quisque Omnem Iste Ad Multis Utilis Est Lux.
140. Rem Quisque Iste Omnem Ad Multis Utilis Est Lux.

Caramuel's work concerns different grammars, metrics, numeracies of letters, musical values, prosody, parts of speech (rhetoric), proper names, and parodies, among much else. In Part II of Metametrica *is a fifty-eight-page section on anagrams, "Metametrica Apollo Anagrammaticus," and another section on "Glossopetra." The following diagrams from* Metametrica *are combinatorial tools, enabling the production of verses by phrase and word in ways comparable to the "Io Caramuel" above.*

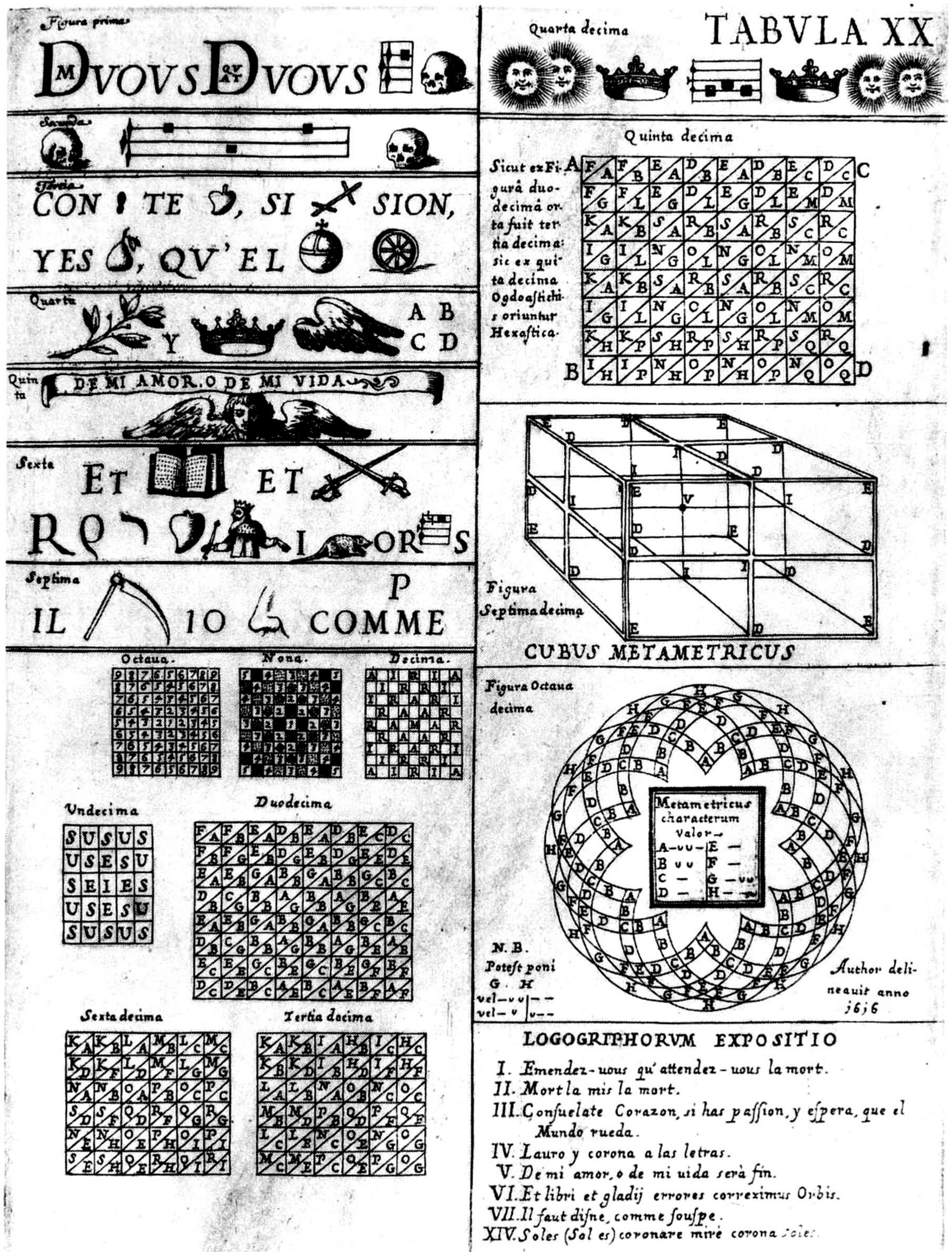
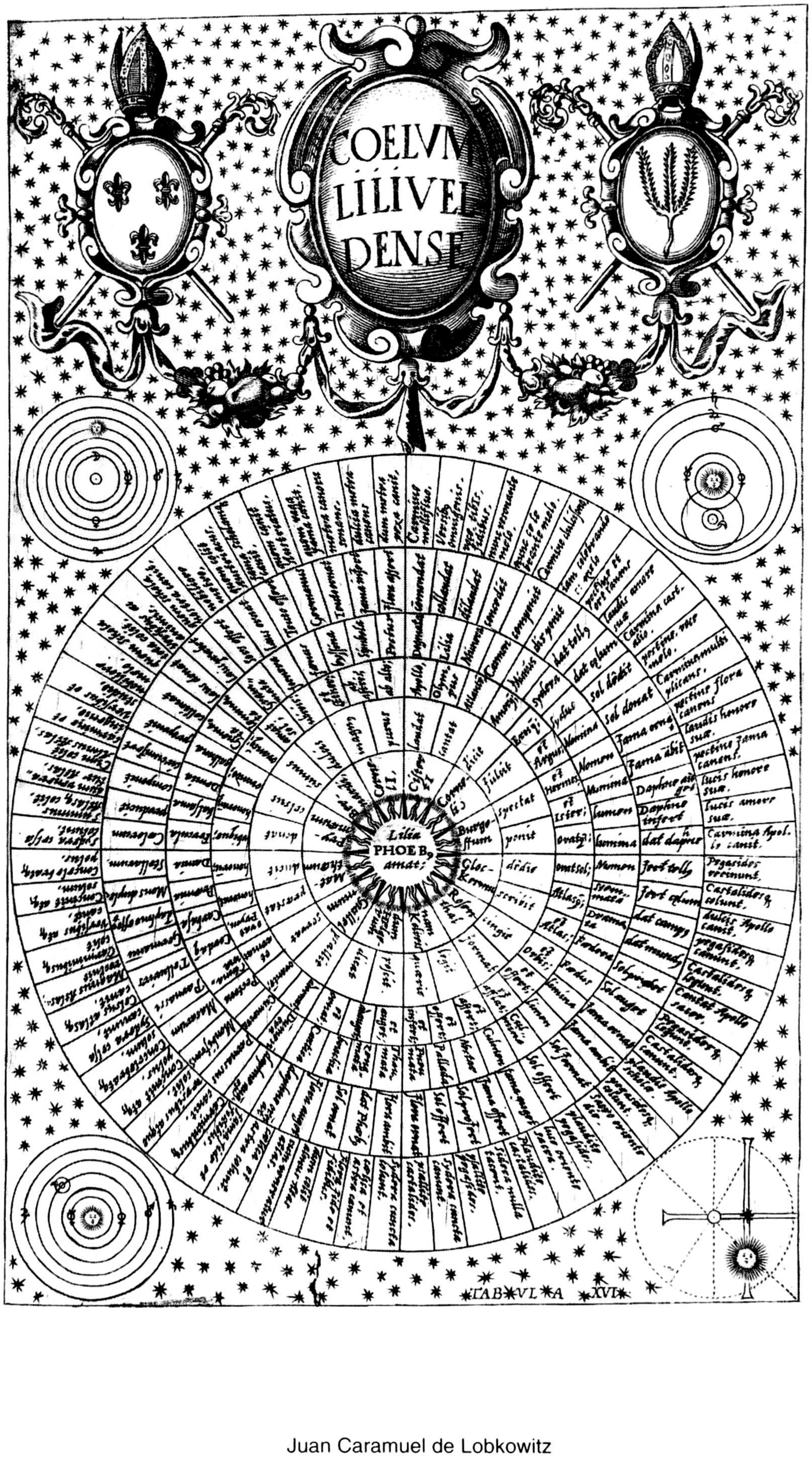


Figura prima
DVOVS DVOVS
Secunda
Tertia
CON TE, SI SION,
YES, QV'EL
Quarta
Y
A B
C D
Quinta
DE MI AMOR, O DE MI VIDA
Sexta
ET ET
I OR S
Septima
P
IL IO COMME
Octaua.
Nona.
Decima.
Vndecima
Duodecima
Sexta decima
Tertia decima
Quarta decima
TABVLA XX
Quinta decima
A
B
C
D
Figura Septima decima
CUBUS METAMETRICUS
Figura Octaua decima
Metametricus characterum Valor
N. B.
Poteſt poni
G . H
Author delineauit anno 1616

Sicut ex Figurâ duodecimâ orta fuit tertia decima: sic ex quinta decima Ogdoaſtichis oriuntur Hexaſtica.

LOGOGRIPHORVM EXPOSITIO

I. Emendez-uous qu'attendez-uous la mort.
II. Mort la mis la mort.
III. Conſuelate Corazon, ſi has paſſion, y eſpera, que el Mundo rueda.
IV. Lauro y corona a las letras.
V. De mi amor, o de mi uida serà fin.
VI. Et libri et gladij errores correximus Orbis.
VII. Il faut diſne, comme ſouſpe.
XIV. Soles (Sol es) coronare mirè corona Soles.


COELVM LILIVELDENSE
Lilia PHOEB9 amat;
TABVLA XVI

Juan Caramuel de Lobkowitz

RADI OS

O III

HAIL

Bright effluence of bright essence
Whose fountain
at the voice
The rising World

RADI OS

Through
the Orphean

descent, and up

To find

the more

Clear
song;

Nightly I visit:

Blind

thoughts that voluntary move
Harmonious numbers

summer's rose,

Shine inward, and
there plant eyes
that I may see and tell
Of things invisible

once

thick as stars,

Ronald Johnson

RADI OS

The radiant image

the only
Garden

On the bare outside of this World,

no bars of Hell, nor

far off Heaven,
And Man there placed,

the sole command,

create

or love

RADI OST.

So were created,
Maker,

by absolute

impulse
immutably foreseen,

change

Unchangeable, eternal

measure
uttering

with the innumerable sound

Encompassed

Of all things made,

creation

Be question
replied : —

My word, my

desires :
Upheld by
ground

of peculiar grace,

The rest shall hear

their senses dark

not shut
within them as

Light after light
to the end

RADI OS

Against the high

naught

where shall we find such love?
mortal, to redeem

mute

Death

In whom

Atonement

Account me Man:

to possess
Life in myself for ever; by

All that of me can die

the ample air

at the sight
shalt look down

the grave;
Then,
enter Heaven, long absent,
to see thy face, wherein no cloud

but

breath

and Earth

Made flesh, when time shall be,

The head of all

transplanted

RADI OS

love shall outdo
death, and dying

assume
Man's nature,

fruition
from utter loss, and

under thee,

in the sky appear
from all winds

such a peal

The World shall burn

to compass all

Ronald Johnson

multitude
from numbers without number,
uttering

The eternal
ground

crown

Tree of Life,

inwreathed with

song

of all being,
Fountain of

Dark with excessive bright

, without cloud

behold:

RADI OS

thunder
flaming wheels
frame

Man: him, through
Father

matter
harp

the Starry Sphere,
and hymn

The luminous
inroad of Darkness

from the wall of

glimmering air
at large in

snowy

flesh

Ronald Johnson

this windy

aerial

other

Dissolved on Earth,
as some have dreamed:
Translated

crystalline balance

RADI OS

cross wind

upwhirled aloft,

Into a Limbo

Of dawning light turned

thick with sparkling

stairs

And waking cried, *This*
Each

underneath a

Rapt

ascent

Direct against

the Earth —

All night,

aware

With glistering spires and

wonder seized,

the circling
extended shade

from pole to pole

Through the pure marble air

:

The golden Sun,
his eye.

RADI OS

The Universe, to each inward part

The place

informed
with fire

Imagined

from the sea,

in the dark

to gaze
Undazzled.
sight no obstacle

Shadow from body opaque can fall

To objects

also in the Sun.

Ronald Johnson

Man,
His journey's end,
his proper shape,

his radiant visage turned
by ear

to the Earth

—

his eye
Creation round—
desire to see and know

Alone

RADI OS

Worlds,
That both in him and all things,

drive
deepest

Sun,

are all his works,

created mind

Infinitude confined;

quintessence
turned to star

Ronald Johnson

Man; that light
which else,

Still ending, still renewing,

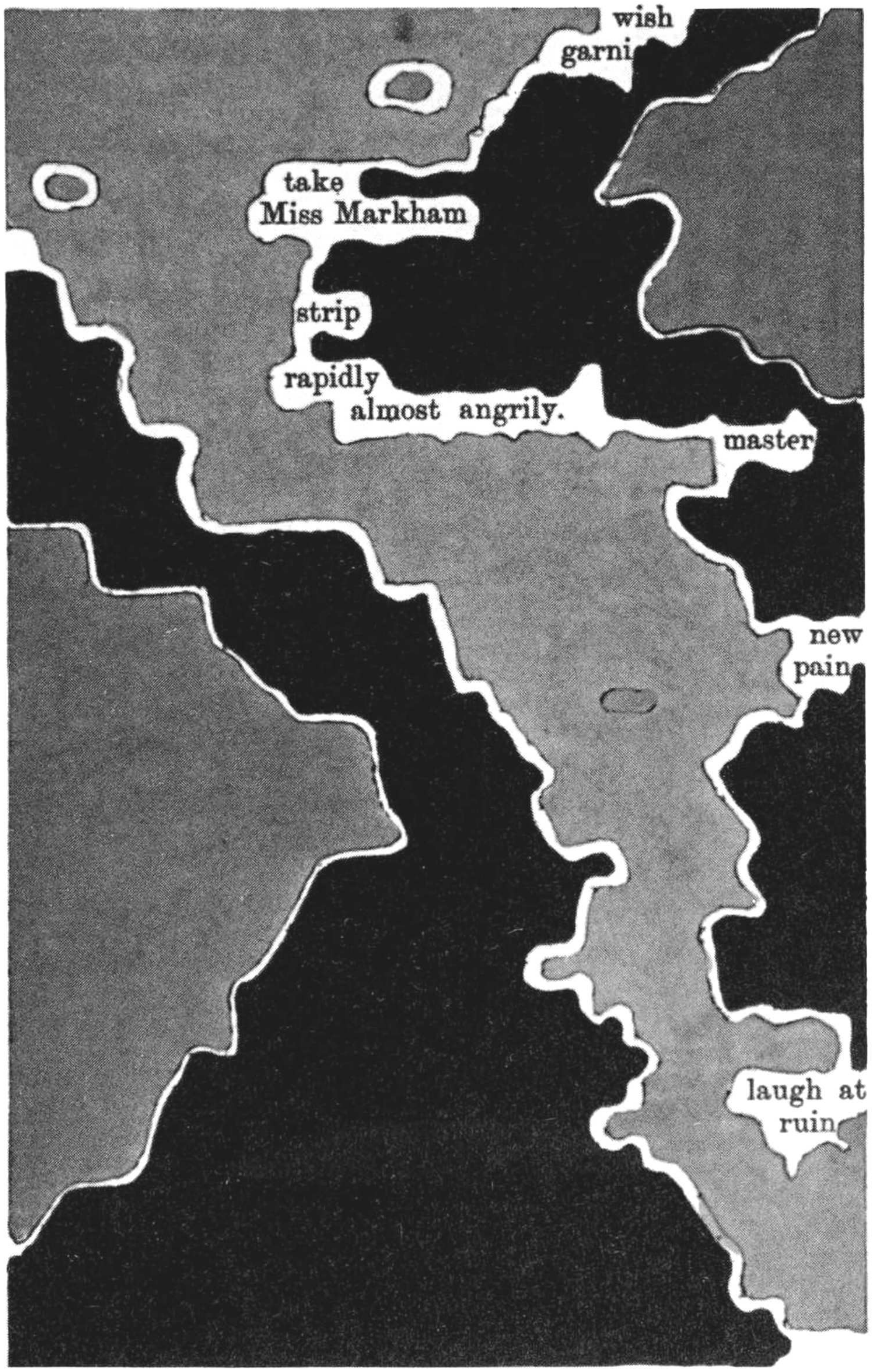
is Paradise,
Adam's

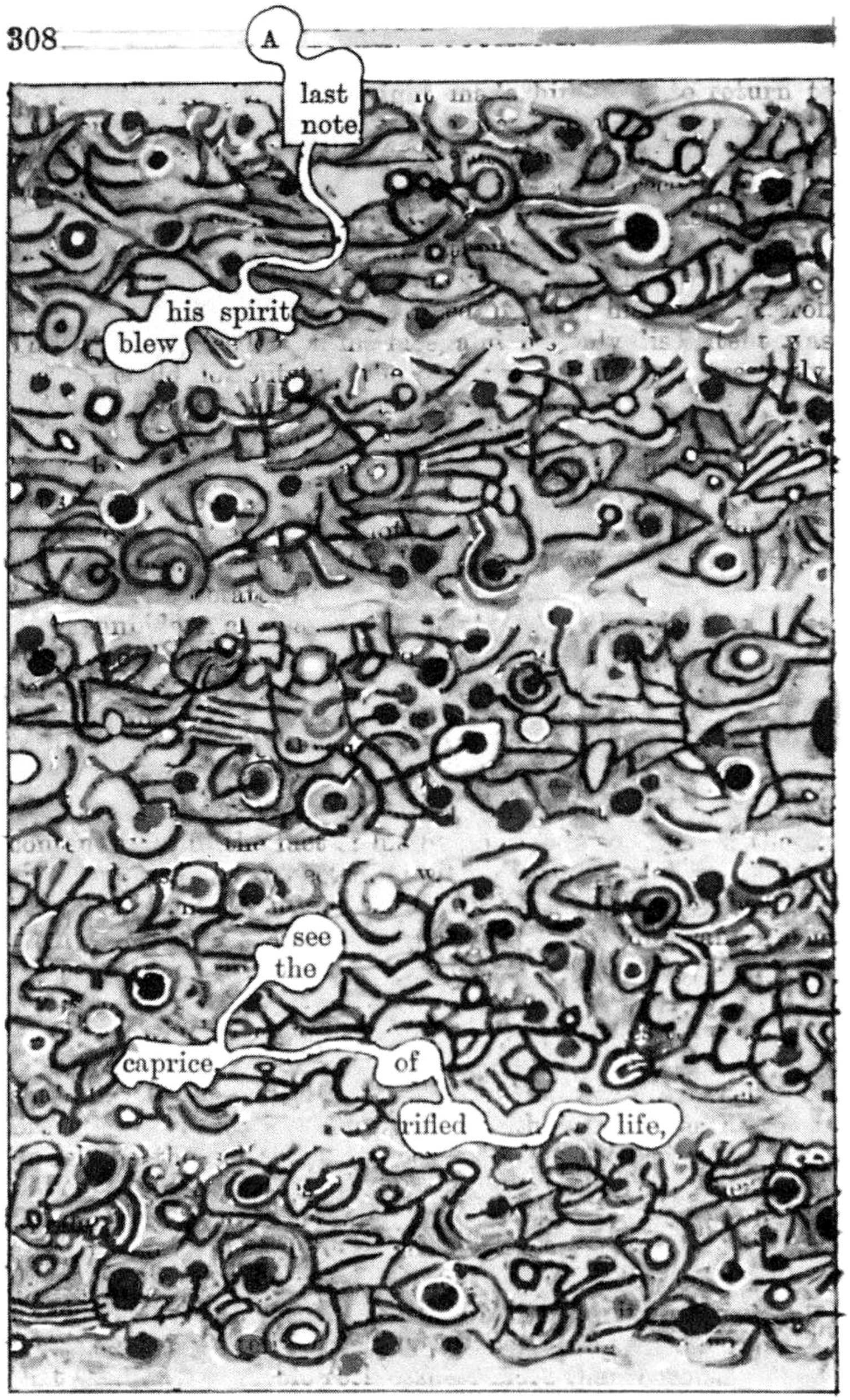
ecliptic,
in many an aery wheel

Tom Phillips

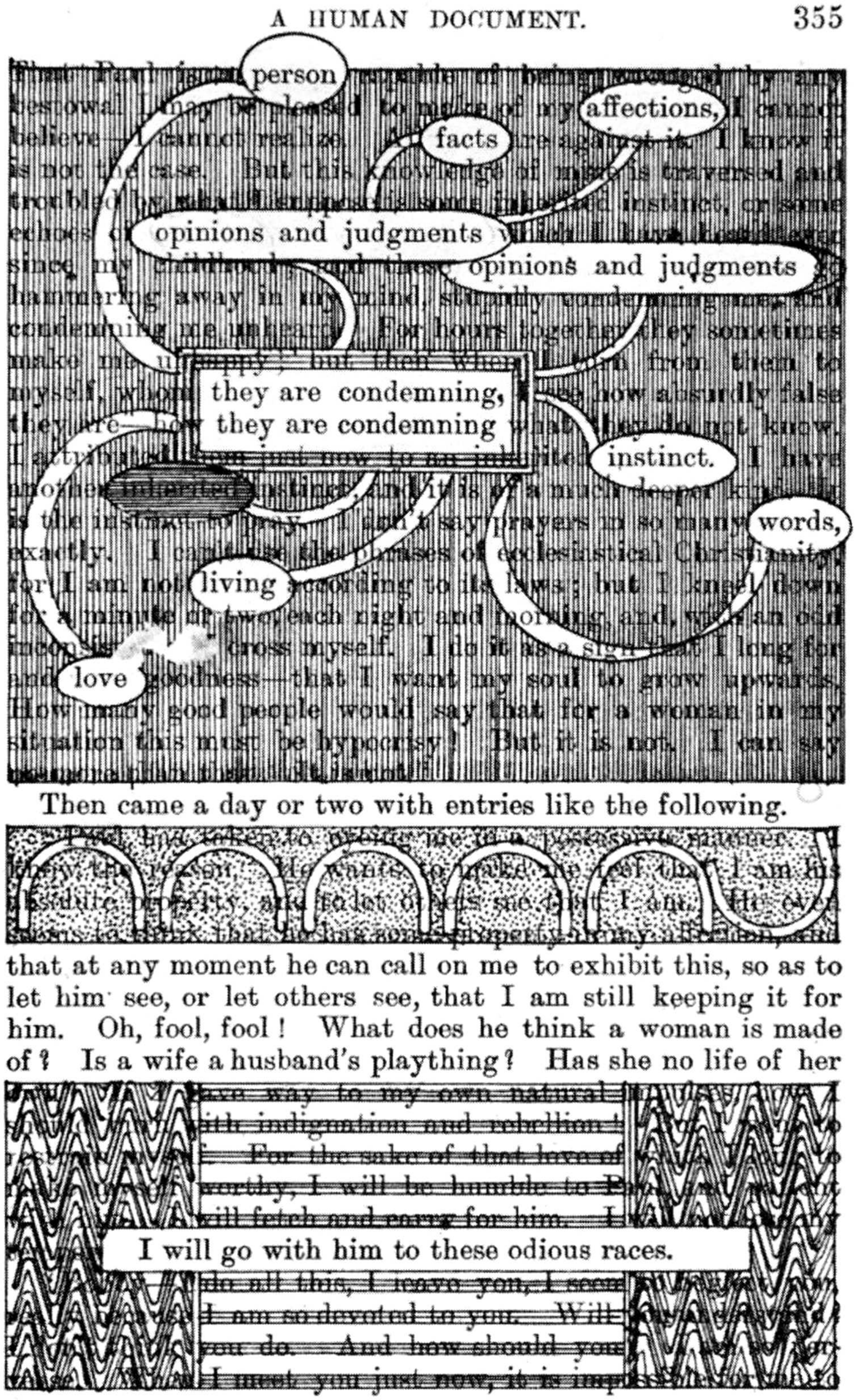
A "treated novel" analogous to John Cage's treated piano, A Humument *is a sustained manipulation and restructuring of W. H. Mallock's forgotten Victorian novel* A Human Document. *Working directly on original pages, Phillips eliminates sections of text to reveal residual and previously hidden syntagms. As Mallock's narrative is obliterated a new one appears; its protagonist Bill Toge has a typographic genesis from the treated word "together." Phillips's multimedia achievement has direct affiliations with Blake's illuminated books and the medieval illuminated tradition in general. Phillips's first treatments of the book date back to 1966, and publication started in 1970 with a limited edition of ten silkscreen pages. After a first appearance in book form in 1980, a new edition of* A Humument *was published in 1987 with over fifty revised pages. We present here two pages from both editions for comparison. Phillips's project of systematic revision is ongoing.*

From *A Humument: A Treated Victorian Novel*


wish
garni
take
Miss Markham
strip
rapidly
almost angrily.
master
new
pain
laugh at
ruin


308
A
last
note
his spirit
blew
see
the
caprice
of
rifled
life,

Tom Phillips



A HUMAN DOCUMENT. 355

person

affections,

facts

opinions and judgments

opinions and judgments

they are condemning,
they are condemning

instinct.

words,

living

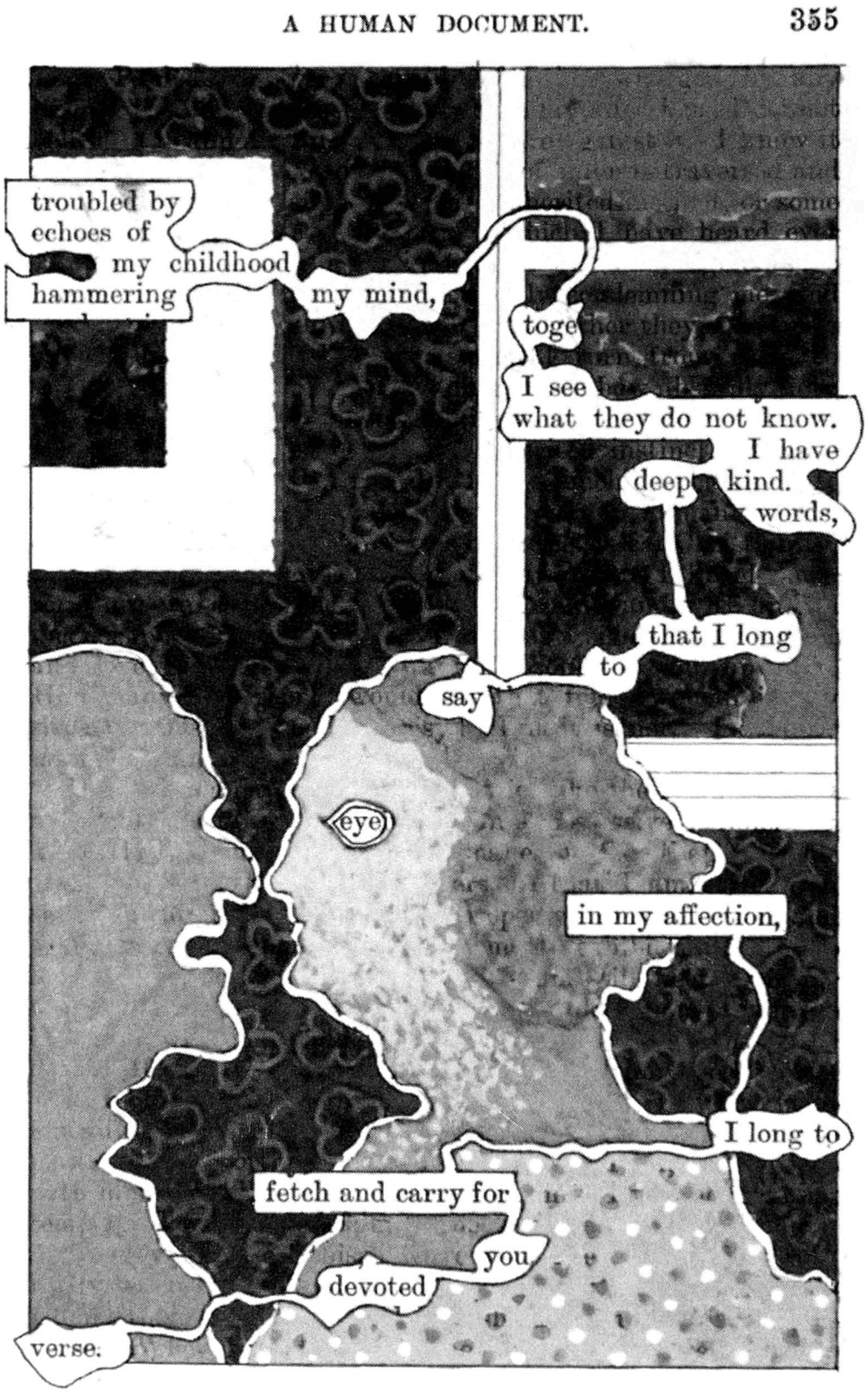
love

Then came a day or two with entries like the following.

that at any moment he can call on me to exhibit this, so as to let him see, or let others see, that I am still keeping it for him. Oh, fool, fool! What does he think a woman is made of? Is a wife a husband's plaything? Has she no life of her

I will go with him to these odious races.

From *A Humument: A Treated Victorian Novel*



A HUMAN DOCUMENT. 355

troubled by
echoes of
my childhood
hammering
my mind,
toge
I see
what they do not know.
I have
deep kind.
words,
that I long
to
say
eye
in my affection,
I long to
fetch and carry for
you
devoted
verse.

Tom Phillips

John Cage

In response to Norman O. Brown's equation of syntax with military order and Thoreau's comment that the sentence reminded him of marching feet, composer John Cage resolved in 1973 to explore a "nonsyntactical 'demilitarized' language." Looking to Finnegans Wake *as a potential model, he was disconcerted by Joyce's retention of "the old structures ('sintalks') in which he put the new words he had made." Cage then resolved to cut through the intrusive Joycean syntax by subjecting the text to the methodology of mesostics, in which "the first letter of a word or name is on the first line and following it on the first line the second letter of the word or name is* not *to be found. (The second letter is on the second line)." Norman O. Brown suggested the additional procedure of ejecting punctuation, which however Cage retained (in a placement determined by consulting the* I Ching*) in the marginal space of the page. For his second mesostic treatment of the* Wake, *more constraints were introduced: "I did not permit the reappearance of a syllable for a given letter of the name. I distinguished between the two J's and the two E's." The excerpt that follows corresponds to our excerpt from* Finnegans Wake *in "transition" (p. 21 above).*

104 *Journey to*
Ark see
the cooMbing of
the parlourmaids of aEgypt
placeat veStrae

105 *he's my o'Jerusalem and i'm his*
pO
my juckeY
from viCtrolia
nuancEe to

Jumbo
to jAlice
two ways of opening the Mouth i
not stoppEd
water where it Should flow and i know

106 *the first book of Jealesies*
childsize herOes
howke cotchme eYe
abe to sare stood iCyk
nEuter till brahm taulked him common sex

107 a Jolting
preArranged
108 Mountback against a partywall
bElow
uSe of quill or style

113 Jully glad
when christmas cOmes
114 aYe to aye
notiCing that
linEs

your maJesty
bOost from
allvoYous
volapuCky
gromwElled

three Jeers 117
for the grApe vine and brew
ruM
smElt
hiS end for him and he dined

deJectedly 121
in the diapered windOw margin
basque of baYleaves all aflutter
Curious
protoparEnt's *ipsissima verba*

Jims
sAhib
pipless as threadworMs
innocEnt
exhibitioniSm

quatrain of rubyJets 122
withOut
loYal
lobster loCks
you'rE another he hasn't

fJorgn 124
wAs
he reMains
postscrapt sEe
Spoils

David Melnick

From *Men in Aïda*

Men in Aïda, they appeal, eh? A day, O Achilles!
Allow men in, emery Achaians. All gay ethic, eh?
Paul asked if tea mousse suck, as Aïda, pro, yaps in.
Here on a Tuesday. 'Hello,' Rhea to cake Eunice in.
'Hojo' noisy tap as hideous debt to lay at a bully.
Ex you, day. Tap wrote a 'D,' a stay. Tenor is Sunday.
Atreides stain axe and Ron and ideas 'll kill you.
The stars' foe at eon are radix unique make his thigh
Leto's and Zeus's son. O garb a silly coal o' they is
Noose on a nast rat-honor's sake, a can, a lick, on toe delay.
A neck, a ton, crews in a time, & ceteretera.
Atreides oh girl tit, oh aspen-y as Achaians.
Loosen 'em us, tea, toga, trap her on tap (heresy a boy now).
Stem Attic on anchors, in neck cable. Oh Apollo on us.
Crews say oh Anna skip trochee, less set to pant as Achaians.
A tray id, a them, a list, a duo, 'cause met to rely on.
"A tray id I take. I alloy a uke, nay me day's Achaians.
Human men theoi doyen Olympia dome attic on teas.
Ech! Pursey Priam's pollen, eh? You'd eke a Dick his thigh.
Pay Dad, am I loose! Ate a pill. Lent Ada a pen to deck his thigh
As oh men idiots who unneck a bowl on Apollo on her."
Nth alloy men panties up you fame as an Achaian.
Aïda is thigh the aerie a gay eagle a deck thigh a boy now.
Alec Atreides Agamemnon and Danny the mo'
All a'cackle, sappy, eh? Cracked her on dippy mouth. On a telly.
"Me say, gay Ron, coil lay sin. Ago pair ran you sick, a hue
In undy. The noun tea hystero naught is you to.
Me now toy. 'Oh,' cries me, skipt Ron & stem math theoio.
Tend to go loose. Opera ink eager as he pays in.
He met a Ron, a Yoko, in our gay Tell, loathe the pat trays.
Is tone a boy? Go men in gay. A moan, lick, oh sandy ocean.
All if I'm me, merit. Is Esau Terah's husk in a Yea?"
Horse fat. Eddie send ogre. Ron keep it at a moo, though.
Bay dock yond pair a thin, a pole, a flow is boy oh the lass is.
Pole odd a pate, a Pa, new the key on Hera though gay rye is.
Ah, baloney! (A knack, Teton-y.) You come most to call Leto.
"Clue the mew are goo, rot ox. Hose creasin' am fib a bake Cass.
Kill, Auntie's a Thane! Ten idiot if he Anna says.
Some in the Huey. Poe tit, toy car, a yente, a pin. Knee on your rep, sir!
A yea day: potty, toy cat, a pee on a Mary Achaia.
Tower roan aide, aye gaunt ode. Ah! My Creon on nailed door.
'Tis saying Dan I am a dog, rue as aye Sibyl lessen."
Hose fat you commie nose toad, igloo, Phoibos Apollo.
Bay deck at Olympus, carry none. Come on us, Oscar.
Took some more sin, eh? Horn 'em fair, a fay at afar, a train.
Ache lanks, and are oh a stirrup, oh moan, come on all you.
Ought toke in net & toes. Oh day & nuke tea, oh egos.
Is it a pity pan? Newton neon met. Add ye on ache-y.
Dane aide day clang, again he'd argue Rae. Oh boy-oh!
Oh Rae as men pee wrote on. A poke at o.k. keen as our goose.
Out are épée et out toys. Sibyl loss, a cup you Cass if yes.

Ballet and a purée, neck you on Guy on totem, may I?
In name mar men. A nest rat on o.k. Tokay La Theoio.
Tea deck a tea dagger and deck a less a toll lay on Achilles.
Toga rip if Rae sit, take a thee, 'll you call on us Hera?
Kay debt. 'Oh guard!' A noun note tear at knees, cunt as Erato.
Heed épée Honegger, then oh may gay Rae stay again on toe.
Toys see Dan is Tom and Osmet, if he Poe dares accuse Achilles.
"A tray a day, noon am maypole in plank. Then dazzle you.
Apse upon a stay scene, eh Ken? Then atone gay fug. Oy men!
Aide day oh mope pole lay most a damn Mac high low i' most Achaians.
All a gay day Tina man tin a ray, oh men he hear ya.
Ache I on a rope alone, guy guard on a wreck, day oh say sting.
Hose cape pee, oh tit, toes on echo sat. O Phoibos Apollo.
Eat tar O you coal lace. Happy men fate: I ate hecatombs.
Hi Ken, 'pose our known knee says 'I gon' tit to lay on.'
Bowl o' tea, Auntie? Ah sauce! Hey me nap, a log on a moon, aye."
  Ate I a goose, a punk? A tar is a tot toy, Sid a nasty.
Calchas Thestorides, soy on a pole. Lo, no ochre his toes.
Hose Eddie tight. Tea on the tatters, summon a pro. Tea on tac-
Ky nay, yes, say gay. Sat a quai on Ilion is so.
Ain't he a man to sin in! Ten high, pour a Phoibos Apollo.
Whose pin, you pro? Neo nag, a race, a toe? Guy met taping.
"O Achilles, kill, lay, I Amy, Dee feel lame. 'Myth,' he says, 'thigh.'
Men in Apollo, a nosy cat, table ate our ('Enact!') toes.
Tiger agone areo. So decent they o.k. my emotion.
Hey men, my prof Ron, a pacin' guy, cares in a rake's seine.
Egg are oh yummy. Andrews call o' semen hose Meg a pant on.
Argue on, critic. All high pay, then tie Achaioi.
Gray song Arbus ill use Hot Tea Co. Set I and Rick Harry.
Apse ergo art echo long gay guy ought to mark, ate a Pepsi.
All at a quai met a piss then a cake, a ton, a prat, a less see.
In stay the sin, nay, oy Sis you dip. Ross sigh, Amy 'sow' says."
  Toned a Pa, may Beau men, as prose a fib, odes, as 'Oh cuss Achilles.'
"Tar says a small ape ate the oh pro pee on hot tea oyster.
Ooh ma' Gar! Apollo on a deep hill, oh no Tess Sue, Calchas.
You come on us, Danaans, sit thee up, rope your son, a fine ace ass.
Ooh 'tis same you zone toes, sky a peak: Tony, Dirk, all men. Oh, you?
Sea coil lace spar Annie you see bar Rae as a care as a boy say.
Some pant on Donna all nude and Agamemnon nigh pace.
Hose noon pollen are his toes a guy own uke a tyin' eye."
  Guy to Teddy thar' says a guy you'd a mantis a moo moan.
"Oh tar a gay you coal lace, a pea, ma'am fit tie you the hecatombs.
Allen neck a rhetor rose. Oh net a mess, Agamemnon.
Ode apple, you say, the got Reggae uke up a deck sat a boy now.
Two neck are all gay: Ed, Ken. Neck Kay ball us aid at id (oh say).
You'd oh gay preen Danaan nigh key alloy gonna pose he.
Preen gap up at rip a load o' men, ay a lick up it accu-rain.
Opry a Tina nap and a boy no nag ain't here in hecatomb bane.
Is cruisin' to take Ken mini-lassy many peppy toy men?"
  A toy, a goose, a punk cat, a raise. It a toy said a nasty.

From *Men in Aïda*

Hey Rose Atreides, you rue crayon Agamemnon?
Ach! Noumenous men. News deem a gay friend of some female lie nigh.
'Pimple land toes,' said Day. 'High puerile a lamp at town take ten.'
Cal can top pro 'tis cock oh so men nose prose say pay.
"Man, tick cock. Cone new pope Poe tame me toke Rae you on a pass.
A yea toy, take cock, is too full of fresh men Tuesday.
Is the lone doubt a tip o' ape? A set oh suit at a laser's.
Cane un-end a now, sith Theo protein nag gore, you ace.
Hose day étude in a cusp in necky bowl, us all gay, a tea o.k.?
Hoo neck, ego coo race, crusade does. Oh clap peña.
Ook Ethel on decks as thigh, up pay Polly boo loam my out ta'en.
Eek, he a can! Guy Garrick Clytemnestra's probable 'ah.'
Coo rid yeas all loco, he pay you the nest, he carry on.
Oh dame as oh deaf, you in out, tarp prayin' as oh titty air ya.
All a guy hose i' the load o' men, I pal in eight toga men on.
Pool loam ago lawn sowin' he men night, eh? A pole his thigh.
Out are Emmy, gay Roz, out ticket toy mass at opera may Hojo's.
Are gay? Own a gay Roz? Toss you a pay, you day. O.k.!
Loosened a garter gay panties oh my gay Roz her cattail lay."
   Tone dame may bet a pay. Tip o' darkies divine Achilles.
"'A tray a day could' is to Phil 'lock tea annotate.' Pant on!
Pose, guard toy, do Sue see gay Roz? Me gay too, my Achaians.
O Day tip with minx soon. Nay, 'a came in a pool a'.
All 'a time men pull you nex' a breath o' men. Tad dead as Ty.
Louse, Duke, 'a pay, kep' a li'l log a' Tao tap. A gay rein.
All assumin' none. Tend death (theo-prose). Out are Achaioi.
Trip laid a trap, late teapot is omen. Ay, cape o' the Zeus.
Do see pole in Troy. Hey you, take yond necks (all a pox), eye."
   Toned up 'a may bomb on us. Prose fake crayon Agamemnon.
"Mayday you too saga those Perry on the oh ace, a lack kill you.
Clay ape to no way pay apparel loose say 'I oh day me pay' says.
Ethel lays up route. Toes ache. Case gay Roz. Ow! Tarry, Mao toes!
Ace thigh duo. Men. Uncle he. I damn it ain't a pod. Dune high.
All aim in. Do Suzie, gay Roz. Me gay too, my Achaioi.
Arse on desk at a (the) moan. Oppose Aunt Axe, you nasty.
Aide deck came made doe. Oh sin, a goad, a Ken, autos. Hello. (My!)
Ate tea on neigh. I Aunt toss yon gay Roz, eh Odysseus?
Ach, so alone! Ode aching echo lows. A tie on Kenny come I.
All late toy men tout. A' met a frazzle mess. The guy out 'tis.
Noon dog a nay ah may line on air ruse o' men ace a laddie on
End, dare a toss, a pit. Teddy's a gay Roman as deck a tomb been.
They oh men endowed, in cruisy he'd dock a lip, a Rae on
Bays. Oh men ace debt is our hose, a nerve, ooh, lay for us!
Eh, Ajax? Eh, Idomeneus? Hideous Odysseus!
Jesu! Pee! Lay (day), pant on neck, aglow. That tanned Ron!
Après me neck care. Gone. Ill lassie I. He air a wrecks ass."

Bob Brown

Bob Brown's fertile imagination has previously been on display with "The Readies" (in "transition," p. 29 above). Gems *(1931) is Brown's portfolio of salaciously redesigned poetic chestnuts in which the sin is entirely in omission, demonstrating that censorship produces the opposite result of what it intends. An American writing in France, Brown likens book censorship to prohibition in his homeland. Noting that hollowed-out books serve as liquor flasks in the United States, he observes a parallel with the trade in "feelthy leetle books in* deluxe *editions": "The new racket is boot-legging books, book-legging." Rather than dish out saucy pornography (which was not beyond his means, as Brown was a prodigious hack writer), he uses the censorial method of the blackout to turn selected poems to new account: "the censor's blots merely give the direction in which the reader's imagination should go," he says. The reader will take care of the rest. "The average imagination can instantly supply more vivid thoughts, salacious suggestions and naughty words than Rabelais and Joyce combined. The reader's mind has an instinctive desire to put in the very wickedest notion it knows, to block the gap and make it more personally his." Brown admits to an aesthetic discomfort reading many of the (predominantly Victorian) originals, but "with that safely over the censoring itself was pleasantly refreshing." For Brown, "Pleasure in poetry comes largely from reading between the lines," and he invites the reader to join in and become "a competent co-creator." Handing the initiative to the reader was an unusual gesture in 1931, but Brown's motives appear to have been earnest and historically conditioned. "There should be a tomb to the unknown word sacrificed in the war. As many words as men were killed, wounded or had their meanings mutilated." Brown's* Gems, *in this light, suggests a comparison with D. H. Lawrence's contemporaneous attempt to address war trauma by revivifying sexual vocabulary in* Lady Chatterley's Lover.

From *Gems*

The Lord of Burleigh (Tennyson)

In her [redacted] he [redacted] gaily,
   If my [redacted] by signs can tell,
Maiden, I have [redacted] thee daily,
   And I think you [redacted] me well.

The Passionate Shepherd to His Love (Marlowe)

Come live with me and be my [redacted],
And we will all the pleasures prove
That [redacted] and [redacted], [redacted] and [redacted],
And all the craggy [redacted] yield.
There will we sit upon the rocks
And see the shepherds [redacted] their flocks.

(Wordsworth)

My [redacted] leaps up when I behold
   A [redacted] in the [redacted]:
So was it when my [redacted] began,
So is it now I am a man,
So be it when I shall grow old
   Or let me die!

Jackson Mac Low

Transverse Flute Narrative for "Winds"/"Instruments"

Lette is on an arête, while errant Lear's among the trees. Their talers on a ratter, they starve through Nerva's fault. These savers and lavers of tsars start an astute returnee to Sèvres—"neural" Steen—on ferula. And Verne? On lasers.

These savers' "ut" on Susan's turf is terse.

But Sverre has his rentes and Estes his vertu. They can sauté anything to taste, and don't have lues or teslas or fenestrules, though their ulnas are versant with Es Sur. But how many teslas can there be in one late flan?

And how much sal in a vault?

Some of their leases are neural, since these leasers have surra. That's why they and Teena restart a fetus and strafe a seer in a fetal ruse.

In Arles their taters and veenas are real, but Lee *slates* veenas for Letts, who ask: "If there are fenestrae in every fetus (and there are) and a salver in the Tar (and there may be), why does no leu fasten to Art in Esterel?" As many return to as turn away from their tenets.

Some ask whether any lunette can be serrate if none's ulnar. Let's ravel it out. Did Varèse ever use terne? He was no tsar. And neither Sue nor Eve will ever be a slave!

They say Erastus leavens Steven's unreal settee with flatuses, though his late aunt was a self-starter. Most sales aren't—no more than Renée is U.

Then did Sverre lure Nast to refute the East? Not if Venetes were ever real. And what about Reval? It was never near a tarn. Nevertheless, some fatten, some avert, and some refuse the unreal as Surtees did vestees.

Do Arles' revenues relate to elators on traves? Where else? Not in vests! Then what did sera ensure for Ur, if a tael can avert a funeral felt in a nevus? That it slant toward Erevan, not us. We aren't any severer, though all luster is from Ra. And when Venus is in estrus, she may flatter stelae terete users revest.

However, in Nevers and Sète furan'll be relet by Vane and Art, although there's a stere of it in Leuven, where there are no reefs to unstate or arrest a leaser. But what does a refuter unreeve from his arse as he strunts about the Senate? Nothing of Serra's, nothing renal, never a sterlet, and nothing frae whoever has rateen to reverse a sternal fever.

Then who'd leave an easel to unstate Tuva's ferrules. Not Serra—he saunters. And not through any fenestrae. He uses tares to taunt truants, transfuse teens, and traverse lutes others revet.

Does no one tease him?

Ane: Furness.
Not she who's at the feet of Reese when she's in estrus?

Yes, she who with her ferula ensures, astern, that she's a teaser, with antlers on her feet and ferula in her eaves. See how she struts, a serf of ferula as Una is of furan.

Una who?

Una Tree.

Mania

In The New Science *Vico mounts a case for the prerational sources of civil institutions with his primary axiom, "Because of the indefinite nature of the human mind, wherever it is lost in ignorance man makes himself the measure of all things." Furthermore, "It is another property of the human mind that whenever men can form no idea of distant and unknown things, they judge them by what is familiar and at hand." In this way, "man in his ignorance makes himself the rule of the universe. . . . So that, as rational metaphysics teaches that man becomes all things by understanding them . . . this imaginative metaphysics shows that man becomes all things by* not *understanding them . . . for when man understands he extends his mind and takes in the things, but when he does not understand he makes the things out of himself and becomes them by transforming himself into them." This is an uncanny forecast of Freud's concepts of* projection *and* introjection. *It is illuminating for a further reason, in that Vico is here elaborating his theory of the poetic basis of human sapience, wherein the tropological propensity of natural language affords the flexibility for social institutions to evolve. Society, we might say in light of Vico, is an elaborate device for extending and stabilizing the initial condition of creative misunderstanding. Like René Girard, who regards social ties as literally and symbolically reinforced by sacrificial violence, Vico compels the thought that a certain madness or frenzy initiates the rational security of a social order—a view to which Freud subscribed as well, not only in works like* Totem and Taboo *and* Civilization and Its Discontents *but in his psychodynamic model of a small sphere of consciousness precariously balanced over a gulf of unregulated libidinal energy.*

The implications for language are momentous. Freud's theory of the unconscious entailed a corresponding anatomy of the subterranean logic of words. "The Psychical Mechanism of Forgetfulness" (1898) predates his magnum opus, The Interpretation of Dreams, *and prepares the way for his insight that linguistic material is practically the only means available for discerning subconcious mentation. But words do not deliver up their secrets without compromise, and Freud was delighted to find his views preceded by Karl Abel, who in 1884 had written: "The essential relativity of all knowledge, thought or consciousness cannot but show itself in language. If everything that we can know is viewed as a transition from something else, every experience must have two sides; and either every name must have a double meaning, or else for every meaning there must be two names." As is well known, Freud was attentive to slips of the tongue and other inadvertent expressions of subconscious thoughts. In Jacques Lacan's extension of Freud, language itself can be seen as an inaugural disturbance, soliciting a compulsive subordination of its speakers in their induction into the "Symbolic order." Lacan's famous thesis is that the unconscious is "structured like a language." In another formulation that leads back to Vico (by way of Freud's "fort/da" game), "I identify myself in Language, but only by losing myself in* *it like an object"; or, as Sylvère Lotringer puts it, "in the linguistic game, the subject of enunciation does not have to be unconscious—language is unconscious for him."*[1]

In psychotic states the body is not clearly distinguishable from the order of signification. Rosenbaum and Sonne hypothesize that the schizophrenic lacks an intact "imaginary body," so words instantly penetrate into the deepest organic recesses. Body parts fill up with words. In a paradoxical inversion, language becomes utterly palpable, while the body is emptied out—becoming the empty sign incarnate. "All words become physical and affect the body immediately," Deleuze comments. As for the body: being fragmented, dispersed (not a unit or a whole, but merely a sum), it is nothing more than "a kind of body-sieve." The Viconian sense of language as bearing the traces of corporeal immersion is rendered explicit by Antonin Artaud, who challenged the sovereignty of the ego: "the ego is not unique because it is dispersed throughout the body instead of the body being gathered around itself in an absolute sensorial equality, comprising a perception of the absolute. For man is not only dispersed *throughout his body, he is also dispersed in the outside of things."*[2] *Artaud registers this dispersal in the pulverization of words into a kind of angelic scatology:*

> What's going to happen is that men are going to show their instincts repressed for so long,
> and I my true language;
>
> **a ta aishena**
> **shoma**
> **shora**
> **borozi**
> **bare**
>
> a cane of red ulcer
> with a fart fiber penis.

Artaud's case has provoked some intriguing reflections on the reciprocity of body and word. "Language is the reverse of the body, the soul turned inside out." "What separates speaking from eating renders speech possible; what separates propositions from things renders propositions possible." As numerous diagnosticians have recognized, in schizophrenia the boundaries of the body are in flux, with the result that words can become preposterously corporealized, and the linguistic function conflated with the alimentary function. Words and feces conjoin—explicitly in our selection from Daniel Schreber's Memoirs of My Nervous Illness. *Schreber's is the most widely discussed case in the annals of psychiatry, largely because he documented his state of mind with remarkable fastidiousness while he was in the grip of delusional fantasies (of cosmic proportions: "everything that happens is in reference to me"). Sentences subdivide into parts,* morsels, *and as with any choice meal these morsels have a fecal conclu-*

sion. Unable to distinguish language from food, Schreber felt driven to spit out mouthfuls of his meals to make way for words.

"Since all of Schreber's physical and mental processes—defecation as well as speech—are controlled by 'divine miracles,' his diarrhea is no less significant than his logorrhea: both aim at the destruction of his rationality." Normally language is conflated with rationality, but Vico's "poetic wisdom" and Schreber's Memoirs *insist on the bodily resources of speech, prompting the consideration that language is a threat to reason rather than its ally—particularly in that "undervoice of murmured speech" that Robert Adams notes is our "constant intimate companion": "language makes a marvellously comfortable nest for the mind." "I put down words, and these words desire other words," says the poet Bernard Noël; or, in the much abused mantra of poststructuralism, "language speaks."*[3] *To speak is to consent to the automatism that grammar provides, whereby language becomes a vast prosthetic support and* displacement. *In psychosis, anxiety about this condition swells to the panic that words are agents of cosmic sedition, the speaker thieved of volition with every utterance.*[4] *Jean-Jacques Lecercle notes that the word harbors "not merely a power to inform, but also to form and to deform"; and he identifies metaphor as the "necessary compromise" by which, to retain control of language, we give free reign to its intrinsic deformities. Tropes capture and display a momentary disorder so as to reinforce order; disfiguration is the limit and remedy of figuration ("These fragments I have shored against my ruins" as Eliot has it in* The Waste Land*).*

The grammatical mistakes made by small children are a source of much delight to parents, for language is here disclosed in its elemental plasticity, and these childish abuses are properly understood as a source of linguistic (re)generation. In a psychiatric context, when adults attain comparable linguistic license, the aesthetic response tends to be subordinated altogether. Nonetheless, writings like Schreber's Memoirs *are valuable not only as documents of madness but as quasi-literary creations. Unlike the subjects of Freud's other case histories, Schreber authored his own account; and the fact of its authorship liberates the* Memoirs *from whatever custodial uses the institution of psychiatry might claim for it. The creative ingenuity of Schreber's text unintentionally impinges on the ontological status of literature.* Memoirs of My Nervous Illness *turns out to flow copiously into a number of institutional domains besides literature: the law (Schreber had been a high court judge, and he prepared his text as a petition for release from the asylum), theology (part of his defense is that his delusional behavior, while socially aberrant, is a devotional practice relating to divine miracles), philosophy and sociology (Louis Sass devotes a book to Schreber and Wittgenstein; and in another book, drawing on Foucault's theory of power/knowledge and the carceral regimes of modern society, Sass sees Schreber as an instance of* "inner *panopticism").*

Works like Schreber's reveal a covert reciprocity between delirium and literary creation. Michel Pierssens, commenting on Brisset's strange homophonic logophilia (for which see "Retentions and Secretions," p. 493 below), remarks that "on the one hand, it inevitably leads to the banks of madness, but, *on the other, itself poses madness as a criterion for the validity of its theses." In a vicious circle, logophilia leads to madness, only to affirm madness as a privileged vantage on language, a vantage which then validates madness as the criterion of validation as such (when it comes to speculation on language, at any rate). Rather than speak of madness, of course, we incline to "imagination," securing a principle of controlled deviance recuperable to the institutional norms of literary study. But the proximity of madness to writing presses insistently through the canonical weave—Smart, Clare, Nerval, Hölderlin, Kleist, Nietzsche, Woolf, Artaud, Pound, Lowell, Sexton, Plath—suggesting that "literature" is excerpted from a broader domain of writing in which the question of madness may be central.*

The tremendous influence of psychiatry on linguistic speculation has given us the specter of delirium, madness, or lunacy as a common trope of language study. But such terms emphasize (and misleadingly romanticize) deviance, distraction, aberrance. So we prefer the term mania, *which in its root recovers a field cognate with mind, mantra, muse. It would be abusive to range freely through the annals of psychiatric testimony in search of aesthetic bagatelles; so it seemed wise to gather, in this section of the anthology, work that* exceeds *the principle of voluntarism that is the precondition of our other exhibits. The transcripts reproduced from* The Language of Psychosis *are valuable because they were initially chosen by the authors—Bent Rosenbaum, a psychiatrist, and Harly Sonne, a linguist—not for strictly diagnostic review but as texts providing clues to the tropological mania of language as such. As Felman proposes in* Writing and Madness, *literature may well be the category marking (and to some extent absorbing and naturalizing) the homology of language and mania. This is especially clear in the case of Russian neurologist A. R. Luria's patient, a man of prodigious memory (verging on those celebrated cases of* savants *who can, for instance, play a Beethoven sonata perfectly on the piano after hearing it once). As Luria discovered, his patient relied on mnemonic techniques of such idiosyncratic complexity as to be confounding to an observer. Appropriately, in the selection offered here, the opening lines of Dante's* Inferno *dissolve into a mnemonic crib resembling a Chaplin skit. Finally, the story by Borges consolidates the intersecting questions of mania, memory, and language as they converge on the figure of Funes, a young man whose prodigious power of recollection renders language an inept collection of generalities wholly inadequate to the reality he perceives.*

The case of Funes raises an issue central to this anthology, which is that of scale. Ortega y Gasset views language oscillating between exuberance and deficiency; and Lecercle charts a transit between the dictionary and the scream. Normative discourse mediates between levels of generality and specificity. To deviate from this—whether by Funes's hyperspecification or by the slogans of nationalist sentiment—is to confront the imbrication of linguistic instrumentality with a plastic constraint: language as the enveloping sensorium of dwelling. Louis Sass characterizes schizophrenia as a condition of hyperreflexivity, a vigilance to detail which is out of control. By contrast, normality is a salutary indigence or inattention: the central nervous system is itself dominated by its activity of subduing and in effect ignoring the multitude of electrochemical signals with which it is bombarded. Pathological hyper-

awareness of this shower of minutiae results, on the linguistic level, in a morbid preoccupation with the raw signifying material: utterances may decompose into sound patterns, or certain formulations dilate into monumental blockages, as is the case for Hugo von Hofmannsthal's Lord Chandos, who laments: "For me everything disintegrated into parts, those parts again into parts; no longer would anything let itself be encompassed by one idea. Single words floated round me; they congealed into eyes which stared at me and into which I was forced to stare back—whirlpools which gave me vertigo and, reeling incessantly, led into the void." Philosophy finds itself perched between the two, sometimes favoring natural language and other times preoccupied with terminological discriminations. Philosophical parsimony is ultimately related to a superstitious regard for the atavistic force of words, as Wittgenstein hints in his dictum "Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language." The problem for philosophers, as our selections here portend, is that words themselves are the mania or "mind" that arises, like a phantom parasite, in the mind so driven by a need for precision that it helplessly conforms to the artifice of language. And as language decomposes to alphabetic rubble the philosopher may succumb to the woeful lament of poet John Clare near the end of his life and at the end of his tether in 1860: "they have cut off my head, and picked out all the letters of the alphabet—all the vowels and consonants—and brought them out through my ears; and they want me to write poetry! I can't do it."

1 There is a convergence of psychoanalytically astute criticism on linguistic delirium in works by Shoshana Felman, Michel Pierssens, and Jean-Jacques Lecercle. Felman makes Nietzsche responsible for placing madness inside thought; Michel Pierssens goes back to Mallarmé who, he says, affords a "stumbling knowledge" of the sign, a hunch that "'madness' is what allows us to grasp the contour of the sign's immaterial being." Pierssens claims "any research upon language thus has madness as a border," while Felman observes that "no discourse about madness can now know whether it is inside or outside of the madness it discusses." Felman defines literature as the resistance to interpretation, noting that this is *also* what we take madness to consist in. The issue becomes for Lecercle a question of the delirium deposited in every discourse by the "délire" of the signs it uses. "All texts are in some way delirious, and consciousness, the control of the subject over his own utterances, represses a deeper *délire.*" The desire for knowledge is nonetheless a *desire.* "Literature, madness, linguistics: three deliria born of the sign and desire." "Depending upon the slope of one's desire and the nuance of nothingness to be discovered there, to touch upon the sign may be to go towards madness, science or literature: triple destiny of the psychotic, of the linguist or of the poet, bound up in the same enigma."

2 Artaud is most famous for his drama theory, *The Theatre and Its Double.* It is notable that theatrical renditions of madness have been particularly successful—Peter Weiss's *Marat/Sade* and Peter Handke's *Kaspar* come to mind, not to mention August Strindberg, along with the linguistic delirium of Eugène Ionesco. In the lunatic theory of the Professor in Ionesco's *The Chairs,* languages all have the same words

except in special cases: "for the word 'Italy,' in French we have the word 'France,' which is an exact translation of it." The Professor tyrannizes his pupil literally to death in the end. Symptomatic of his lethal temper is his panegyric on the science of phonetics: "it takes years and years to learn to pronounce," he says. "Thanks to science, we can achieve this in a few minutes." As for acoustics, "If you utter several sounds at an accelerated speed, they will automatically cling to each other, constituting thus syllables, words, even sentences, that is to say groupings of various importance, purely irrational assemblages of sounds, denuded of all sense, but for that very reason the more capable of maintaining themselves without danger at a high altitude in the air. By themselves, words charged with significance will fall, weighted down by their meaning." As menacingly humorous as Ionesco's play can be, Handke's *Kaspar* is a tour de force comparable, in theatrical terms, to Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations.* It charts the formation and deformation of consciousness in the feral child, Kaspar Hauser, who was at the center of eighteenth-century debates about whether language was innate or learned. Handke helps us see that words can be *made* "innate" by introjection, resulting in a paroxysm of schizoid incantations. A voice-over in the play prompts in the unlucky Kaspar a self-consciousness paternalized into a hyperconscious superego. "You have a sentence to bring order into every disorder: with which you can designate every disorder in comparison to another disorder as a comparative order: with which you can declare every disorder an order: can bring yourself into order: can deny every disorder. You have a sentence of which you can make a model for yourself. You have a sentence you can place between yourself and everything else."

3 The dictum that "*language* speaks" is a keynote of Heidegger's later philosophy. "Language speaks by saying"; and "Saying is the gathering that joins all appearance of the in itself manifold showing which everywhere lets all that is shown abide within itself."

4 Conversely, as Allan Ingram speculates, language may also serve as the structuring device by which the insane seize on an image of their fitness. A fundamental question "is the extent to which modes of mental existence are consolidated by their capacity for coherent and mellifluous expression. If a single word or phrase . . . or a sentence from a dream . . . could validate a month, a year, a lifetime of madness, and the linguistic strategies and evasions that involved, how much more completely might a poem be capable of performing an act of validation that both encapsulates and regenerates the reality of a mad mind."

Bent Rosenbaum and Harly Sonne

Rosenbaum, a psychiatrist, and Sonne, a linguist, argue in The Language of Psychosis *on behalf of therapeutic interviews as an alternative to pharmacological sedation in treating cases of acute chronic schizophrenia. Combining Saussurean linguistics with the psychoanalytic approach of Jacques Lacan, they attempt to uncover the recessed structures of signification in dialogues like those offered here. The most conspicuous element is deictic instability (deixis is the name for parts of speech the precise meaning of which depends on context: terms like* this, that, here, there, *and the pronouns). Rosenbaum and Sonne discover "a split between the 'I' and the body . . . where the organs of the body make their return in the space of speech as speaking, demanding, and acting organs." The perforation of a normally intact "imaginary body" results in a confusion of internal and external, self and other. "Here and Now tend toward the infinite; local matters merge with the global; and the speaker takes on the disguises of the multitude of figures available by the discourses that come to hand." In the extracts below (translated from Danish by the authors), I = interviewer and P = patient.*

Clinical Dialogues with Schizophrenics

1

I. Is it something you have experienced?

P. No, yes, it's been said to us.

I. Aha.

P. Yes, it's been said.

I. Who said it to you?

P. Well, I can hardly remember who. There are many young gentlemen here, many young people who have been separated, and they have said it—they have told something about it. Yes.

I. Where are these young people?

P. Well, they are three hundred things after all, so we are, we had people all over space, yes. There were . . . the whole of space was filled with people and then they were put into three skins at our place. [Three skins (*tre hamme*): in Nordic mythology, when an individual puts on a skin, he or she changes character at the same time.]

I. Three skins?

P. Yes, they were put into the body, but I think that two of the skins are ready, they should be ready, they should be separated. And there were three hundred thousand who had no reason, or soul, or reason. But now they are so . . . , now it seems that there are some who have neither soul nor reason and they had to be helped, and people have to be helped, I can't do it here in this where we are, we have to be in . . . if I am to take care of these things. These . . . that's what the ladies say, they are aware . . .

I. Oh, you are saying that you can't help the people where you are?

P. Yes.

I. Do you mean that you can't help the people while you are in hospital?

P. No, I can't. I can't. Because one can't speak, so I can't . . . must be helped, they must be helped in various ways. I can't. No.

I. In what ways do you help these people?

P. Well, I can't—I can't say it. I don't really want to say it. If anyone is listening to this then I don't really want to say it.

I. Hm.

P. Yes.

I. Is that a secret way then?

P. No, it isn't. It's a very useful way. That's the way I've helped them in Øster Søgade [a street in Copenhagen], we helped them in that way.

I. In Øster Søgade?

P. Yes, we helped them in that way there and there were many who slid away and many who were helped. Yes.

I. There were many who slid away and many who were helped?

P. Yes, I don't know how many, I don't know. But there are many trisks and svilts [patient's neologisms] and people, there are people and trisks and svilts. I think there are most trisks and svilts. That is those who are made out of svilt clay.

I. Out of svilt clay?

P. Yes, it is out on space. They make them in trilms [patient's neologism].

I. Trilm?

P. By trilms. And then they go through three levels. Some only go through two. Some go through three. Yes. When they make them.

I. Is svilt clay something I can touch?

P. Yes, I don't know, it's something that's made, that's made out of dogs who were dead, they have lain bodily out in the spaces. They all wanted to have a relationship with . . . with everything they came near. And they follow those. . . . They, ah, they follow those who are made out of svilt clay. They always want a sexual relationship . . .

I. They want a sexual relationship?

P. Yes, they want a sexual relationship. Precisely. Some go . . . perhaps don't have so much with that . . . they want to interfere and destroy everything . . . yes . . . I don't know if there is anyone who is listening to this. It's not certain they can understand it.

I. Do you think they can't understand it?

P. No. I don't know if they can understand it, those who are listening to this.

I. Would you like people to . . . to understand it?

P. Well, not when I'm in this place. We can't, otherwise we would, it's very good that people understand it. Many people in Copenhagen understand it and they've listened to . . . we . . . we have a tape that speaks. It's a *tape* speaking now [English "tape" = Danish *bånd*].

I. It's a *child* that's speaking now? [English "child" = Danish *barn*]

P. Yes, because our, um, our, um people, the two vicars' wives, they don't speak very much, and therefore it's an old tape speaking.

I. It's an old tape speaking?

P. It's an old tape speaking when . . .

I. When you are speaking now?

P. Yes, that's a tape too. And it's an old skin, I don't know, it's been so abused, we're sitting in, on the vicars' wives.

2

I. Could I also go and see it if I wanted to?

P. Yes, that is if you have perspectives. And see it, then you can see it down under Øster Søgade.

I. Could anybody see it?

P. Anyone who has perspectives *can* see it.

I. Anyone who has perspectives . . . ?

P. And *can* see . . .

I. And *can* see . . . ?

P. Yes.

I. Even when you *yourself* haven't seen it?

P. Yes.

I. When did you . . . did you read . . . ?

P. No, it's a tape, it's a tape that's speaking, yes, it's a tape that's speaking, that's been recorded.

I. Aha.

P. We have lots of things that are recorded on the tape. And, um, they are correct things. One can investigate that.

I. This tape. Is it something inside of you or is it something that has to do with . . .

P. Well, it's in the vicar's wives, it has slide in, it has slid in, it's been in a skin, in the words, but most people are separated here, there have been a lot of people. And there have been large blocks which slid out yesterday, large blocks of people who were blocked together. They . . . we let them slide out into the sugar pools.

I. Out into the sugar pools?

P. Yes, the sugar pools, yes. Then they are dissolved and they can exist better.

I. Doesn't that sound pretty grim?

P. Yes, it does, but one can investigate and see if it's true.

3

I. Um, at home, do you sit and think about these things, or what do you do at home?

P. Well, now they've got *Berlingske Tidende* [a conservative daily newspaper], so I read *Berlingske Tidende* aloud. There are twenty [Danish *tyve* can mean either "thieves" or "twenty"] from different planets who listen to it, and one from this planet who listens to it, and if there is anything which must . . . can be helped through the newspapers, I can't see what it is, but they know what it is, and if there is anything there machines or children or anything which should be helped . . .

I. Who can see it?

P. It, they, those who listen from different planets, there are twenty or maybe more who listen from different planets, perhaps there are some from different, what shall I say, departments or trisks and svilts and to people, and there is also someone from this planet who listens, yes. And so I read the newspaper aloud when I get the opportunity. Or, read aloud or show them the pages and they have to look for themselves because I can't see . . .

I. Can you talk to these trisks and svilts?

P. Well, they don't speak to anyone. But a wire can be attached to them, then they're able to speak.

I. Hm. Have you attached . . . ?

P. People have been put into them. Then they can speak.

I. Hm.

P. No, I don't speak with them. We're not allowed to speak very much. A tape explains it to us.

I. Hm. That means that you don't think you are speaking yourself? It's a tape that's speaking?

P. Yes, it's a tape that's speaking.

I. Hm.

P. There isn't anything that . . . it's not people speaking. It's a tape that's like in the Parliament, there they also have, I don't know who, they have tapes there too. They talk . . .

I. They have tapes in the Parliament?

P. Yes, there . . . they have tapes they talk on. But it's the same, you know, trisks and svilts, you know, it's the same, when one has tapes, it's the same.

I. Oh . . .

P. Yes, they don't really care when one has tapes. They don't pay any attention to that.

Translated by Bent Rosenbaum and Harly Sonne

Daniel Paul Schreber

Schreber is unique among Freud's case studies because he was not actually treated by Freud, whose "Psychoanalytic Notes upon a Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoides)" (1911) is based on Schreber's autobiographical book published in 1903. Schreber was a judge who spent six months in a clinic (1884–1885) recuperating from delusional symptoms, then returned to a productive career until 1893 when he was committed to an asylum until 1902. Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken *was written in the asylum, partly as self-analysis but also as legal testimony to petition for his release. Schreber chronicles his delusions with unnerving lucidity. Freud regards the case as one of latent homosexuality. Schreber's own concerns are also diagnostic, but of cosmological application. Feeling himself to be the victim of "soul murder," Schreber describes a system of universal retributions in which he is the central victim, forced to undergo a sex change and submit to divine recreational abuse. He adopts a Zoroastrian vocabulary to refer to the Gods (Ormazd and Ahriman) who have double dealings with him. He testifies that his inner organs are constantly being pulverized, then restored by divine rays. These same rays are the vehicles by which the upper God reabsorbs dead souls, depositing them in the Forecourts of Heaven. Schreber's discovery of this nefarious design—which amounts to nothing short of divine necrophilia—is what occasions regular assaults from pestilential agents of the Gods, including birds whose songs consist of salacious morsels of human vocabulary. The invasive dimension of language—including the "bellowing miracle," auditory hallucinations, and compulsive speech—is a recurrent topic of Schreber's narration in the following extracts. References to Flechsig are to Schreber's doctor during his first confinement.*

From *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*

One night—perhaps the fourth or fifth after my arrival at Sonnenstein—I succeeded with immense mental effort in temporarily drawing down to myself all impure ("tested") souls; it would only have required a thorough "covering with rays" for my recovery through one nerve-restoring sleep and with it the disappearance of the impure souls. (Unfortunately one could not decide to adopt this course for the reason mentioned previously). In consequence Flechsig's soul took special measures to exclude the recurrence of such a danger to its existence and to that of other impure souls. It resorted to *mechanical fastening* as an expedient; a technique of which I was only able to get a rough idea. This mechanical fastening first occurred in a looser form called "tying-to-rays," where the word "rays" seems to have been used in a special sense which I did not fully understand. I can only describe the picture I saw with my mind's eye. According to this the souls hung on a kind of bundle of rods (like the fasces of the Roman Lictors), but in such a manner that the rods spread out below like a cone, while the nerves of the souls were tied fast around the upper points. When this looser form of fastening seemed not to afford sufficient defence against my power of attraction and the danger of dissolving in my body, a more resistant form was chosen which was called "tying-to-celestial-bodies." As the expression denotes, a tying to some distant stars occurred which from then on excluded the possibility of a complete dissolution in my body in consequence of my power of attraction; on the contrary withdrawal was safeguarded through the mechanical fastening so established. When the "middle Flechsig" used this form of fastening for the first time, it was felt in God's realms that behaviour so contrary to the Order of the World could not be tolerated. The "middle Flechsig" was therefore forced to untie himself again. But when the experiment was later repeated there was no longer sufficient energy for such measures; the tying was permitted, in which not only all other Flechsig soul parts participated, but also the souls in their train, particularly that of v. W. and finally God's omnipotence itself. In this way "tying-to-celestial-bodies" became a permanent institution continuing to the present day and led to further consequences, particularly the "writing-down-system," now to be described. I realize that such a conception, according to which one must think of my body on our earth as connected to other stars by stretched out nerves, is almost incomprehensible to other people considering the immense distances involved; for me however as a result of my daily experiences over the last six years there can be no doubt as to the objective reality of this relation.

. . .

Books or other notes are kept in which for years have been *written-down* all my thoughts, all my phrases, all my necessaries, all the articles in my possession or around me, all persons with whom I come into contact, etc. I cannot say with certainty who does the writing down. As I cannot imagine God's omnipotence lacks all intelligence, I presume that the writing down is done by creatures given human shape on distant celestial bodies after the manner of the fleeting-improvised-men, but lacking all intelligence; their hands are led automatically, as it were, by passing rays for the purpose of making them write down, so that later rays can again look at what has been written.

To illuminate the purpose of this whole system I must enlarge further. All the attacks made over the years, on my life, my bodily integrity, my manliness and my reason, were and still are based on the same idea: to withdraw again as far as possible from the power of attraction of my over-excited nerves, which far surpasses anything that has ever existed before. To that end one at first considered my *unmanning*, apparently in recognition of the fundamental tendency of the Order of the World. This was not unmanning aimed at renewing mankind in consonance with World Order, but only an intended insult, for in a peculiar way it was imagined, or perhaps wishfully thought, that an unmanned body would lose its power of attraction for the rays. Years after my arrival at Sonnenstein, the idea of unmanning still appeared, if I may so express myself, in the minds of the souls. Small parts of Flechsig's soul which were distant, and therefore not in contact with my nerves for quite some time, used repeatedly to exclaim as if astonished: "Is he not unmanned yet?" God's rays frequently mocked me about a supposedly imminent unmanning as "Miss Schreber" [in English in the original]; an expression used frequently and repeated *ad nauseam* was: "You are to be *represented* as given to voluptuous excesses," etc. I myself felt the danger of unmanning for a long time as a threatening ignominy, especially while there was the possibility of my body being sexually abused by other people.

. . .

With this phenomenon becoming increasingly manifest in the course of time, God might have become aware that unmanning was not a way of "*forsaking*" me, that is of freeing Himself again from the power of attraction of my nerves. From this the idea arose to "retain me on the masculine side," but—again under basically false pretences—not in order to restore my health, but to destroy my reason or to make me demented. Again one paid no attention to the fact that the nerves, even of a demented human being, would in a state of highly pathological excitement retain their power of attraction—provided, of course, that they were still generally capable of sensation as of pain, voluptuousness, hunger, cold, etc. Incessantly therefore, day after day and hour after hour, poison of corpses and other putrid matter which the rays carried was heaped upon my body, in the belief that it would be possible in this way to suffocate me eventually and in particular to rob me of my reason. In the next chapter I will relate what temporary damage was thus wrought on my body in a most threatening manner.

I have reason to assume that the poison of corpses or the putrid matter was taken from the same celestial bodies to which the rays had been tied, and where they were packed as it were with it or soaked it up in passing. Some of the rays had been given the shape of miracled birds about which I shall have more to say later. It became apparent that the tested souls which were still in heaven, and what had remained of the erstwhile forecourts of heaven, which one had kept in reserve in order to be able to take refuge behind them, had in the course of time totally lost their intelligence, that is to say they had no thoughts of their own left. On the other hand it seems to lie in the nature of rays that they must *speak* as soon as they are in motion; the relevant law was expressed in the phrase "do not forget that rays must speak," and this was spoken into my nerves innumerable times, particularly early on. But in fact for years, lacking own thoughts, they have spoken of nothing but their own miracles, falsely attributing fear of them to my nerves (for instance, "If only my fingers were not paralysed," or "If only miracles would not affect my knee-cap"); further, everything I was about to do was cursed (for instance, "If only the cursed piano-playing would cease," as soon as I sit down at the piano, or even "If only the cursed cleaning of nails would cease," as soon as I start cleaning my nails). Over and above this one has the boundless impudence—I can use no other expression—to demand that I should express this falsified nonsense in spoken words as if it were my own thoughts, in this fashion: "If only the cursed piano-playing would cease" was followed by the question: "Why don't you say it (aloud)?", and this again was followed by the falsified answer: "Because I am stupid, perhaps," or again "Because I am frightened of Mr. M." Naturally there are now also pauses in which there is nothing to report of miracles directed against my person, nor any definite "thought of resolution" to undertake this or that occupation which the rays, *being able to read my thoughts,* can recognize; in other words, when I indulge in thinking nothing, particularly at night when I sleep or in daytime when I temporarily rest or walk about in the garden without thinking, etc. . . .

The offensive phrases and abusive words serve the particular purpose of inciting me to talk aloud and so to make sleep impossible at the proper times; for the whole policy of souls culminates in the prevention of sleep and soul-voluptuousness; but the aim of the whole policy remains totally obscure. The writing-down also serves as another peculiar trick which again is based on a total misunderstanding of human thinking. It was believed that my store of thoughts could be exhausted by being written-down, so that eventually the time would come when new ideas could no longer appear in me; this of course is quite absurd, because human thinking is inexhaustible; for instance reading a book or a newspaper always stimulates new thoughts. This was the trick: as soon as an idea I had had before and which was (already) written-down, recurred—such a recurrence is of course quite unavoidable in the case of many thoughts, for instance the thought in the morning "Now I will wash" or when playing the piano the thought "This is a beautiful passage," etc.—as soon as such a budding thought was spotted in me, the approaching rays were sent down with the phrase "We have already got this," *scil.* written-down; in a manner hard to describe the rays were thereby made unreceptive to the power of attraction of such a thought.

. . .

The voices emanating from the lower God—although also no longer the *genuine* expression of direct momentary feeling, but rather an admixture of phrases learnt by rote—still differ considerably in *form* and *content* from those of the upper God. At least *their content* is not only abusive and full of insulting phrases, but amounts to a kind of neutral nonsense (for instance "David and Solomon," "salad and radishes," "little heaps of flour," etc., are repeated again and again). In their *form* also they are less of a nuisance to me because they fit in better with the natural right of man to think nothing. In time one grows accustomed to letting such nonsensical phrases as those mentioned in brackets pass through one's mind as forms of the "not-thinking-of-anything-thought." But the lower God, at least during the first years after the change described in this chapter, had at his disposal also a certain number of phrases which were of actual significance and which showed a quite correct (that is the same as my own) notion of the causes of the conflict, the means of its solution and probable future developments. But as said before, these were not genuine expressions of momentary feeling, but predetermined concoctions of thoughts spoken into my head by senseless voices in tiresome, monotonous repetition (later on mostly by miraculously produced birds). . . .

The change in the grouping of the parties which had occurred in consequence of the increase of soul-voluptuousness was signalized by the often-repeated phrase "Two parties have formed." Then there were various ways of expressing the thought that the whole policy God was pursuing against me aimed at destroying my reason had failed. Some phrases were of a general nature without any personal implication, as for instance: "Knowledge and capabilities can in any case never be lost" and "Sleep must come"; further: "All nonsense (that is, the nonsense of thought reading and falsifying thoughts) cancels itself out," and "Permanent successes are on the side of the human being." Other phrases of the lower God were in part addressed to me personally, in part—spoken through my head as it were—to his colleague, the upper God; the former particularly in the already mentioned phrase: "Don't forget that you are tied to the soul-conception," the latter in phrases such as for instance: "Don't forget that all representing is nonsense," or "Don't forget that the end of the world is a contradiction in itself," or "Well, since you have made the weather dependent on one human being's thoughts," or "Well, you have made any holy occupation impossible (for instance playing the piano or playing chess, through the manifold interfering miracles)." On a very few occasions one even went so far as to make a kind of confession of one's own guilt, for instance: "If only *I* had not put you among the fleeting-improvised-men," or "Well, such are the consequences of the renowned soul-policy," or "What is to become of the whole cursed affair," or "If only the cursed play-with-human-beings would cease." From time to time the confession was *in these words:* "The feeling is lacking," that is the feeling we ought to have for every decent human being, even for the most abominable sinner, considering the means of purification provided in the Order of the World. For a time the aim of the whole development was expressed by the lower God in the phrase—grammatically incomplete as is so often the case in the soul-language: "Hope that voluptuousness reaches a degree," that is to say such a degree that divine rays would lose all *interest* in withdrawing, thus naturally resulting in a solution in consonance with the Order of the World. However, the lower God also had a number of other phrases in readiness which made me shudder, in other words I had to exert all my reason to try to uphold the conviction that he could not possibly succeed. There was talk of "colossal powers" on the part of God's omnipotence and of "hopeless resistance" on my part; it was thought necessary to remind me that the possibility for God to withdraw was boundless with the often-repeated phrase: "Don't forget that eternity is boundless."

. . .

I have no doubt whatever that my early ideas were not simply "delusions" and "hallucinations" because even now I still receive impressions daily and hourly which make it perfectly clear to me that, in Hamlet's words, *there is something rotten in the state of Denmark*—that is to say in the relationship between God and mankind. But how the present state of things developed historically, whether by sudden changes or gradual transition, and to what extent apart from the manifestations of life caused by the influence of rays (miracles), manifestations of life occur independently and uninfluenced by the rays, remains even for me an obscure point. I am quite sure that expressions and phrases like "fleeting-improvised-men" and "cursed-play-with-human-beings," the questions: "What is going to happen to this cursed affair?", etc., as well as the talk about "new human beings from Schreber's spirit" did not originate in my head, but were spoken into it from outside. This alone would make me assume that the ideas connected with them have some basis in reality corresponding to some historical events. Moreover in the course of the last six years I have unintermittently received impressions—and still receive them daily and hourly—which furnish me with incontestable proof that everything spoken and done by human beings near me is due to the effect of miracles and directly connected with the rays coming nearer and alternately striving to withdraw again.

I have already mentioned that every word spoken near me or with me, every human action however small which is combined with some noise, for instance opening the door-locks on my corridor, pressing the latch on the door of my room, the entry of an attendant into my room, etc., is accompanied by a sensation of a painful blow directed at my head; the sensation of pain is like a sudden pulling inside my head which calls forth a very unpleasant feeling as soon as God has withdrawn to an excessive distance, and may be combined with the tearing off of part of the bony substance of my skull—at least that is how it feels. As long as I talk aloud—in my room or in the garden—turned towards God, everything around me is deathly quiet and God has no wish to withdraw, as He receives the direct impression of the activity of a human being in complete possession of his senses. This creates a feeling in me at times as if I were moving among walking corpses, so completely seem the people (attendants and patients) suddenly to have lost the capacity to say one single word. The same happens as long as my gaze rests on a female being. But as soon as I turn my gaze or allow my eyes to be closed by miracles, or as soon as I change from talking aloud to silence without at the same time starting some mental occupation, in other words when I give myself up to thinking nothing, the following phenomena which are interrelated occur almost at once (at first sight):

(1) Noises around me, mostly consisting in violent outbursts among the lunatics who of course form the majority of those around me;

(2) In my own person the advent of the bellowing-miracle when my muscles serving the processes of respiration are set in motion by the lower God (Ariman) in such a way that I am forced to emit bellowing noises, unless I try very hard to suppress them; sometimes this bellowing recurs so frequently and so quickly that it becomes almost unbearable and at night makes it impossible to remain in bed;

(3) The winds arise, however not uninfluenced by the existing state of the weather; but short blasts of wind coinciding with pauses in my thinking are quite unmistakable;

(4) The cries of "help" of those of God's nerves separated from the total mass, sound the more woeful the further away God has withdrawn from me, and the greater therefore the distance which those nerves have to travel, obviously in a state of some anxiety.

All these phenomena happen hundreds of times every day; I must have observed them in the course of years tens of thousands if not hundreds of thousands of times with exactly the same regularity. I have repeatedly pointed to the reason. Every time my thinking activity ceases God instantly regards my mental powers as extinct, the desired destruction of my reason[1] (the "dementia") achieved and the possibility of a withdrawal thus brought about.

And so the withdrawal action is started, and to achieve it an "interference" produced by miracle. This is the noise mentioned in (1) above. Simultaneously and almost immediately the so-called bellowing miracle is produced by the lower God ((2) above). It seems to serve a double purpose, namely to create by "representing" the impression of a person bellowing because he is demented; and also to drown by bellowing the inner voices which the upper God started so that he could withdraw to a greater distance; in this way the lower God, who seems somehow aware of the necessity of allowing himself to be attracted, could count on a union of all rays and on soul-voluptuousness which it causes in my body; in other words he could safeguard himself from entering my body *without soul-voluptuousness.* Withdrawal to a greater distance at once causes (see (3)) the wind to arise. Nevertheless the upper God soon becomes aware that the hoped for cessation of the power of attraction of my nerves has once again not been achieved but rather persists undiminished; this causes a state of anxiety in those of God's nerves which first became separated (see (4)) and is expressed with genuine feeling in cries of "help." It remains a riddle to me that the cries of help are apparently not heard by other human beings: the sound which reaches my own ear—hundreds of times every day—is so definite that it cannot be a hallucination. The genuine "cries of help" are always instantly followed by the phrase which has been learnt by rote: "If only the cursed cries of help would stop."

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[1] That this was the aim was previously often acknowledged quite openly in the phrase which I heard emanating from the upper God "We want to destroy your reason." Of late this phrase has been used less often, because when it is repeated time and again it also amounts to a kind of the not-thinking-of-anything-thought.

That all signs of life of human beings around me, particularly their speech, are caused by miracles (influence of rays), is clearly shown also in the *content* of what is said. I must expand this in order to make it clear. As already remarked, when God started the tying-to-celestial bodies He spared not only the tested souls which were still about, but also what was left of the erstwhile "forecourts of heaven"—that is to say the blessed souls of human beings; the purpose was to load them with poison of corpses when the power of attraction of my nerves caused them to come nearer, and send them out in advance as outposts and so slow down the attraction of the genuine rays of God. One probably also believed that at least one could choke me through the mass of poison of corpses which in this manner was daily heaped upon my body, that is to say be able to kill me or destroy my reason. These nerves (the remnants of the forecourts of heaven) have appeared for years in the shape of *birds created by miracle,* thereby manifesting a mysterious connection with the innermost nature of divine creation; in so far they are unfathomable even to me. But the fact itself *that the nerves which are inside these birds are remnants* (single nerves) *of souls of human beings who had become blessed* is absolutely certain because of my observations repeated thousands of times every day for years.

I recognize the individual nerves exactly by the tone of their voices from years of hearing them; I know exactly which of the senseless phrases learnt by rote I can expect of each one of them, according to whether they are emitted from the camp of the lower God or from that of the upper God (produced by miracle by the latter or the former). Their property as erstwhile human nerves is evidenced by the fact that *all* the miraculously produced birds *without exception,* whenever they have completely unloaded the poison of corpses which they carry, that is to say when they have reeled off the phrases drummed into them, then express *in human sounds* the *genuine* feeling of well-being in the soul-voluptuousness of my body which they share, with the words "Damned fellow"[2] or "Somehow damned," *the only words in which they are still capable of giving expression to genuine feeling.* They have not the least understanding of what they have spoken before, i.e. for the phrases learnt by rote—to retain this expression which naturally is only to be understood figuratively; they reel them off without knowing the sense of the words; it seems that otherwise their intelligence is no higher than that of natural birds.

I cannot say how their nerves are made to vibrate in such a manner that sounds spoken or more correctly lisped by them sound like human words, of which the phrases learnt by rote are composed: I therefore cannot explain the technicalities of the matter, but I presume that it is a question of supernatural matters which therefore are completely incomprehensible to human beings.[3] But their *effect* is well known to me from years of experience; it consists in the nerves of the miraculously created birds being made *immune* against all sensation which they would otherwise have when entering my body, particularly against soul-voluptuousness or visual impressions, as long as they are occupied with reeling off the phrases drummed into them (learnt by rote), just as if they entered into me blindfolded or with their natural capacity for feeling somehow suspended. This after all is the purpose of the whole business and also the reason for the tempo of these automatic phrases being more and more slowed down in the course of years—in proportion to the increase of soul-voluptuousness: the destructive power of the poison of corpses carried by the entering voices was to be maintained as long as possible. With it, however, a most peculiar phenomenon arose which is of the greatest importance for the extent of the damage the voices or rays concerned cause in my body.

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[2] The words "damned fellow" are here not used in any derogatory sense, in fact just the reverse, as was the rule in the basic language, namely in that of joyous tribute or admiration.

[3] (Written some days later than the above text.) Perhaps it is a similar process to the one attempted with my own nerves, of which I became aware in the form of transitory dementing or diminution of my powers of thinking. One could imagine that the covering of the nerves of birds with the poison of corpses robs them of their natural capacity to vibrate, that is to say of their natural feeling, and in a way tends to stretch them; the result is that they are only able to perform the long-drawn-out vibrations corresponding to human words which have lately been spoken extremely slowly.

It has already been mentioned that the miraculously created birds do not understand the *meaning* of the words they speak; but apparently they have a natural sensitivity for *similarity of sounds.* Therefore if, while reeling off the automatic phrases, they perceive *either* in the vibrations of my own nerves (my thoughts) *or* in speech of people around me, words which *sound* the same or similar to their own phrases, they apparently experience surprise and in a way fall for the similarity in sound; in other words the surprise makes them forget the rest of their mechanical phrases and they suddenly pass over into *genuine* feeling.

It has already been said that the sounds need not be completely identical; a similarity suffices, as in any case the birds do not understand the *sense* of the words; therefore it matters little to them—in order to give some examples—whether one speaks of

"Santiago" or "Carthago"
"Chinesenthum" or "Jesum Christum"
"Abendroth" or "Athemnoth"
"Ariman" or "Ackermann"
"Briefbeschwerer" or "Herr Prüfer schwört"

etc., etc.[4]

To confuse these talking birds by deliberately throwing in similar sounding words became a kind of pastime in the voices' almost unbearably tedious twaddle which afforded me a somewhat queer amusement. However droll this may sound the matter also has its serious side. The upper and lower God who also know that the miraculously created birds fall for similar sounds, use this peculiarity as a trump card against each other. Each wants to hold back and push the other forward; whenever the birds fall for similarity of sound, the attraction of that part is increased from whose camp the voices emanate. Thus the upper God likes to make persons around me say those words which belong to the writing-down-material and to the voices of the lower God and vice versa, while I for my part, aiming at a union of all rays and so at a uniform attraction, always have to counteract these efforts. Here too I could furnish as many examples as there are grains of sand in the sea.

To mention only a few: "electric light" and "railways," as well as the "colossal powers" and the "hopeless resistance" belong to the writing-down material of the *lower* God. The *upper* God therefore causes a conversation carried on in my presence—also during meals at the Director's table—to turn to "electric railways," everything is found "colossal" and at every opportune or inopportune moment one speaks of "hopes" so frequently that it is astounding and excludes all possibility of coincidence. This alone—apart from much else—constitutes absolute proof for me that *the nerves of the human*

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[4] These examples are taken from the actual writing-down or speech-material; 'Herr Prüfer,' the name of a patient in this Asylum, I used to hear often. I could multiply the examples a hundred or thousandfold but will let the above suffice.

beings who use these words are made to do so through the influence of rays (*miracles*)—naturally without their knowing it; in other words it is proof of the reality of the so-called *"play-with-human-beings"* about which the lower God used to speak innumerable times in earlier years. . . .

I want to add something about the birds created by miracle; it is queer that the individual nerves or souls which are in them appear in the shape of different *kinds of birds* according to the season of the year. The same nerves are in the spring contained in the bodies of finches or other singing birds, in the summer in those of swallows, and in winter in those of sparrows or crows. I have no doubt about the identity of the souls concerned because I know the tone of their voices well, and I recognize the phrases I regularly hear from them and which have, so to speak, been crammed into them.[5]

This naturally leads to the question whether they *can* possibly *have a continual life* or whether they have to be created anew by miracles every day or anyway at longer intervals of time. I can only raise but not answer this question. I observe that the miraculously created birds feed and empty themselves in the manner of natural birds; it would therefore be possible that the miraculously created state is maintained for a time by taking in nourishment; I have also repeatedly observed them building nests in the spring which appears to point to some powers of reproduction. Their language on the other hand makes it certain for me that in other respects they are not completely natural birds.

. . .

My nerves are influenced by the rays to vibrate corresponding to certain human words; their choice therefore is not subject to my own will, but is due to an influence exerted on me from without. From the beginning the *system of not-finishing-a-sentence* prevailed, that is to say the vibrations caused in my nerves and the words so produced contain not mainly finished thoughts, but unfinished ideas, or only fragments of ideas, which my nerves have to supplement to make up the sense. It is in the nature of nerves that if unconnected words or started phrases are thrown into them, they automatically attempt to complete them to finished thoughts satisfactory to the human mind.

The system of not-finishing-a-sentence became more and more prevalent in the course of years, the more the souls lacked own thoughts. In particular, for years single conjunctions or adverbs have been spoken into my nerves thousands of times; these ought only to introduce clauses, but it is left to my nerves to complete them in a manner satisfactory to a thinking mind. Thus for years I have heard daily in hundredfold repetition incoherent words spoken into my nerves without any context, such as "Why not?", "Why, if," "Why, because I," "Be it," "With respect to him" (that is to say that something or other has to be thought or said with respect to myself); further an absolutely senseless "Oh" thrown into my nerves; finally certain fragments of sentences which were earlier on expressed completely; as for instance

1. "Now I shall,"
2. "You were to,"
3. "I shall,"

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[5] The expression "crammed in" which occurred to me only during writing, seems to express the relation even better than the previously used expressions "learnt by rote" and "drummed in." The latter expressions could make one think that the miraculously created birds were aware of the *sense* of the words; but that is not so. Their speech *in respect of the crammed in phrases* is not even as advanced as a parrot's. The parrot repeats words learnt on his own impulse, in other words of his own free will. On the other hand the miraculously created birds *must* reel off the crammed in phrases without any regard to time or circumstance and irrespective of whether they want to or not.

4. "It will be,"

5. "This of course was,"

6. "Lacking now is,"

etc. In order to give the reader some idea of the original meaning of these incomplete phrases I will add the way they used to be completed, but are now omitted and left to be completed by my nerves. The phrases ought to have been:

1. Now I shall resign myself to being stupid;

2. You were to be represented as denying God, as given to voluptuous excesses, etc.;

3. I shall have to think about that first;

4. It will be done now, the joint of pork;

5. This of course was too much from the soul's point of view;

6. Lacking now is only the leading idea, that is—we, the rays, have no thoughts.

The rather tasteless phrase about the joint of pork (number 4) is due to myself having used years ago the figure of speech "done like a joint of pork" in the nerve-language. This phrase was seized on and became a constantly recurring part of the speech-material. The "joint of pork" I was to refer to myself: it was meant to express that I was done, i.e. that my power of resistance against the attacks on my reason by the rays must by now be exhausted.

The purpose of not-finishing-a-sentence is consistent with God's attitude to me throughout: to prevent dissolution in my body which would necessarily result from its attraction. While conditions prevailed which were at least somehow in consonance with the Order of the World, that is before tying-to-rays and tying-to-celestial-bodies was started, a momentary uniform *feeling* was enough to make the freely suspended souls jump down from the sky into my mouth, thus ending their independent existence; an event I actually experienced repeatedly. But mere "intellectual deliberation" had the same effect; whenever expressed in a grammatically complete sentence, the rays would be led straight to me, and entering my body (though capable of withdrawing) temporarily increase its soul-voluptuousness. Not-finishing-a-sentence has apparently the effect that the rays are, as it were, held up half way, and could therefore withdraw before having added to soul-voluptuousness in my body; but even this does not permanently prevent the attraction completely; it only slows it down.

. . .

The questions or querying particles spoken into my nerves compel my mind to work by setting the corresponding nerves in vibration, in a way that they cannot possibly escape the impulse to think. I must leave undecided whether the expression I chose of my nerves being set in corresponding vibrations by the rays, covers the circumstances correctly; what I directly feel is that the talking voices (lately in particular the voices of the talking birds) as *inner voices* move like long threads into my head and there cause a painful feeling of tension through the poison of corpses which they deposit.

In contradistinction to these inner voices I hear outer voices particularly spoken by birds, which come to me from outside, from the birds' throats. However, in both cases my nerves cannot avoid the sound of the spoken words; the stimulation of my nerves follows automatically and compels me to think on when I hear questions or incomplete thoughts. In earlier years my nerves simply had to think on, to answer questions, to complete broken-off sentences etc. Only later was I gradually able to accustom my nerves (my "basis") to ignoring the stimulation which forced them to think on, by simply repeating the words and phrases and thus turning them into not-thinking-of-anything-thoughts. I have done that for a long time now with conjunctions and adverbs which would need a full clause for their completion. If

I hear for instance "Why, because I," or "Be it," I repeat these words for as long as possible without attempting to complete the sense by trying to connect them with what I thought before.

I proceed in the same manner when attempts are made with the words "if only my" to compel my nerves to develop ideas of fear, not really present in my mind but falsely imputed to me. I know what can be "expected" to follow—because as a rule the corresponding miracle happens simultaneously and I feel it on my body; the intended continuation is sometimes "If only my voluptuousness were not disturbed," sometimes "If only my boots were not removed by miracle," sometimes "if only my nose, my eyes, my knee-cap, my skull, etc., would not be affected by miracles."

. . .

The infringement of the freedom of human thinking or more correctly thinking nothing, which constitutes the essence of compulsive thinking, became more unbearable in the course of years with the slowing down of the talk of the voices. This is connected with the increased soul-voluptuousness of my body and—despite all writing-down—with the great shortage of speech-material at the disposal of the rays with which to bridge the vast distances separating the stars, where they are suspended, from my body.

No one who has not personally experienced these phenomena like I have can have any idea of the extent to which speech has slowed down. To say "But naturally" is spoken B.b.b.u.u.u.t.t.t. n.n.n.a.a.a.t.t.t.u.u.u.r. r.r.a.a.a.l.l.l.y.y.y, or "Why do you not then shit?" W.w.w.h.h.h.y.y.y d.d.d.o.o.o. . . . . ; and each requires perhaps thirty to sixty seconds to be completed. This would be bound to cause such nervous impatience in every human being, not like myself more and more inventive in using methods of defence, as to make him jump out of his skin; a faint idea of the nervous unrest caused is perhaps the example of a Judge or teacher always listening to a mentally dull witness or a stuttering scholar, who despite all attempts cannot clearly get out what he is asked or wants to say.

Playing the piano and reading books and newspapers is—as far as the state of my head allows—my main defence, which makes even the most drawn-out voices finally perish; at night when this is not easily done or in day-time when the mind requires a change of occupation, I usually found committing poems to memory a successful remedy. I learnt a great number of poems by heart particularly Schiller's ballads, long sections of Schiller's and Goethe's dramas, as well as arias from operas and humorous poems, amongst others from Max and Moritz, Struwelpeter and Spekter's fables, which I then recite in silence on the quiet verbatim. Their value as poetry naturally does not matter; however insignificant the rhymes, even obscene verses are worth their weight in gold as mental nourishment compared with the terrible nonsense my nerves are otherwise forced to listen to.

Even while reciting poems I have to combat difficulties which at times reduce their effectiveness; miracles aimed at scattering my thoughts act on my nerves and make it impossible to find the continuation of a poem learnt by heart; or when the most persistent inner voices have at last been silenced by the recital of longer poems and I have reached a state of great soul-voluptuousness through union of all rays, the lower God starts the bellowing miracle until I am so breathless that I cannot continue reciting the poems even softly.

. . .

Because of its very characteristic meaning I must devote a few more remarks to the above-mentioned question "Why do you then not shit?", however indelicate the subject may be. Like everything else in my body, the need to empty myself is also called forth by miracles;

this is done by forcing the faeces in the bowel forwards (sometimes also backwards) and when owing to previous evacuation there is insufficient material present, the small remnants in the bowel are smeared on my backside. This miracle, initiated by the upper God, is repeated every day at least several dozen times. It is connected with the idea which is quite incomprehensible for human beings and can only be explained by God's complete lack of knowledge of the living human being as an organism, that "sh. . . . ." is to a certain extent the final act; that is to say when the miracles produce the urge to sh . . the goal of destroying my reason is reached, and so the possibility afforded for a final withdrawal of the rays. Trying to trace the origin of this idea one must assume some misunderstanding of the symbolic meaning of the act of defecation, namely that he who entered into a special relationship to divine rays as I have is to a certain extent entitled to sh . . on all the world.

At the same time, however, the whole perfidy of the policy conducted towards me is clear. Whenever the need to defecate is produced by miracle, some other person in my environment is sent to the lavatory—by exciting the nerves of the person concerned—in order to prevent me from emptying myself; this I have observed so frequently (thousands of times) and so regularly that one can exclude any thought of it being coincidence. The question "Why do you then not sh . . ?" is followed by the capital answer "Because I am somehow stupid." The pen almost resists writing down the fantastic nonsense that God in His blindness and lack of knowledge of human nature in fact goes so far that He assumes a human being could exist who—something every animal is capable of doing—cannot sh . . for sheer stupidity. When I do empty myself—usually in a bucket because I almost always find the lavatory occupied—this act is always combined with a very strong development of soul-voluptuousness. Liberation from the pressure of faeces present in the guts creates an intense feeling of well-being, particularly for the nerves of voluptuousness; the same happens when I pass water. For that reason all rays have always and without exception been united during evacuation and passing water; and for this very reason, namely to avoid a union of all rays, one attempts (usually unsuccessfully) to miracle away the urge.

Translated by Ida Macalpine and Richard A. Hunter

Christopher Smart

Smart spent more than five of his forty-nine years (1722–1771) in madhouses, and died in a debtor's prison. Jubilate Agno *was written in an asylum and not published until 1939 under the title* Rejoice in the Lamb: A Song from Bedlam. *The reason for his incarceration is not precisely known, but his friend Samuel Johnson maintained it was for wearing dirty clothes and succumbing to devotional bouts of prayer in the middle of public thoroughfares. Thomas Vogler draws an interesting parallel with Smart's contemporary, Alexander Cruden, who was confined for only a few weeks for comparable behavior, and on his release petitioned Parliament to nominate him "Corrector of the People." Cruden spent the rest of his life producing a concordance to the Bible: "This project morcelized the holy scriptures into morphemes and alphabetized the pieces, transforming holy writ into 'language'." Smart achieves comparable effects in the passage below, in which he seizes upon the arbitrary sequence of the alphabet as a way of ordering incommensurate thoughts, observations, and enthusiasms.*

From *Jubilate Agno*

For the letter ל which signifies GOD by himself is on the fibre of some leaf in every Tree.
For ל is the grain of the human heart and on the network of the skin.
For ל is in the veins of all stones both precious and common.
For ל is upon every hair both of man and beast.
For ל is in the grain of wood.
For ל is in the ore of all metals.
For ל is on the scales of all fish.
For ל is on the petals of all flowers.
For ל is upon all shells.
For ל is in the constituent particles of air.
For ל is on the mite of the earth.
For ל is in the water yea in every drop.
For ל is in the incomprehensible ingredients of fire.
For ל is in the stars the sun and in the Moon.
For ל is upon the Sapphire Vault.
For the doubling of flowers is the improvement of the gard'ner's talent.
For the flowers are great blessings.

For the Lord made a Nosegay in the meadow with his disciples and preached upon the lily.
For the angels of God took it out of his hand and carried it to the Height.
For a man cannot have public spirit, who is void of private benevolence.
For there is no Height in which there are not flowers.
For flowers have great virtues for all the senses.
For the flower glorifies God and the root parries the adversary.
For the flowers have their angels even the words of God's Creation.
For the warp and woof of flowers are worked by perpetual moving spirits.
For flowers are good both for the living and the dead.
For there is a language of flowers.
For there is a sound reasoning upon all flowers.
For elegant phrases are nothing but flowers.
For flowers are peculiarly the poetry of Christ.
For flowers are medicinal.
For flowers are musical in ocular harmony.
For the right names of flowers are yet in heaven. God make gard'ners better nomenclators.
For the Poorman's nosegay is an introduction to a Prince.
For it were better for the SERVICE, if only select psalms were read.
For the Lamentations of Jeremiah, Songs from other scriptures, and parts of Esdras might be taken to supply the quantity.
For A is the beginning of learning and the door of heaven.
For B is a creature busy and bustling.
For C is a sense quick and penetrating.
For D is depth.
For E is eternity—such is the power of the English letters taken singly.
For F is faith.
For G is God—whom I pray to be gracious to Livemore my fellow prisoner.
For H is not a letter, but a spirit—Benedicatur Jesus Christus, sic spirem!
For I is identity. God be gracious to Henry Hatsell.
For K is king.
For L is love. God in every language.
For M is music and Hebrew מ is the direct figure of God's harp.
For N is new.
For O is open.
For P is power.
For Q is quick.

For R is right.
For S is soul.
For T is truth. God be gracious to Jermyn Pratt and to Harriote his Sister.
For U is unity, and his right name is Uve to work it double.
For W is word.
For ƆG is hope—consisting of two check G—God be gracious to Anne Hope.
For Y is yea. God be gracious to Bennet and his family!
For Z is zeal.
For in the education of children it is necessary to watch the words, which they pronounce with difficulty, for such are against them in their consequences.
For A is awe, if pronounced full. Stand in awe and sin not.
For B pronounced in the animal is bey importing authority.
For C pronounced hard is ke importing to shut.
For D pronounced full is day.
For E is east particularly when formed little e with his eye.
For F in its secondary meaning is fair.
For G in a secondary sense is good.
For H is heave.
For I is the organ of vision.
For K is keep.
For L is light, and ל is the line of beauty.
For M is meet.
For N is nay.
For O is over.
For P is peace.
For Q is quarter.
For R is rain, or thus reign, or thus rein.
For S is save.
For T is take.
For V is veil.
For W is world.
For ƆG beginneth not, but connects and continues.
For Y is young—the Lord direct me in the better way of going on in the Fifth year of my jeopardy June the 17th N.S. 1760. God be gracious to Dr YOUNG.
For Z is zest. God give us all a relish of our duty.
For Action and Speaking are one according to God and the Ancients.

For the approaches of Death are by illumination.
For a man cannot have Public Spirit, who is void of private benevolence.
For the order of Alamoth is first three, second six, third eighteen, fourth fifty four, and then the whole band.
For the order of Sheminith is first ten, second twenty, third thirty and then the whole band.
For the first entrance into Heaven is by complement.
For Flowers can see, and Pope's Carnations knew him.
For the devil works upon damps and lowth and causes agues.
For Ignorance is a sin, because illumination is to be had by prayer.
For many a genius being lost at the plough is a false thought—the divine providence is a better manager.
For a man's idleness is the fruit of the adversary's diligence.
For diligence is the gift of God, as well as other good things.
For it is a good NOTHING in one's own eyes and in the eyes of fools.
For aera in its primitive sense is but a weed amongst corn.
For there is no knowing of times and seasons, in submitting them to God stands the Christian's Chronology.
For Jacob's brown sheep wore the Golden fleece.
For Shaving of the face was the invention of the Sodomites to make men look like women.
For God has given us a language of monosyllables to prevent our clipping.
For a toad enjoys a finer prospect than another creature to compensate his lack.
  Tho' toad I am the object of man's hate.
  Yet better am I than a reprobate. (who has the worst of prospects).
For there are stones, whose constituent particles are little toads.
For the spiritual music is as follows.
For there is the thunder-stop, which is the voice of God direct.
For the rest of the stops are by their rhymes.
For the trumpet rhymes are sound bound, soar more and the like.
For the Shawm rhymes are lawn fawn moon boon and the like.
For the harp rhymes are sing ring string and the like.
For the cymbal rhymes are bell well toll soul and the like.
For the flute rhymes are tooth youth suit mute and the like.
For the dulcimer rhymes are grace place beat heat and the like.
For the Clarinet rhymes are clean seen and the like.
For the Bassoon rhymes are pass, class and the like. God be gracious to Baumgarden.
For the dulcimer are rather van fan and the like and grace place &c are of the bassoon.

For the beat heat, weep peep &c are of the pipe.
For every word has its marrow in the English tongue for order and for delight.
For the dissyllables such as able table &c are the fiddle rhymes.
For all dissyllables and some trissyllables are fiddle rhymes.
For the relations of words are in pairs first.
For the relations of words sometimes in oppositions.
For the relations of words are according to their distances from the pair.

A. R. Luria

Mnemonic for the Opening of Dante's Commedia

In December 1937, S., who had no knowledge of Italian, was read the first four lines of *The Divine Comedy:*

Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura
Che la diritta via era smarrita
Ah quanto a dir qual era è cosa dura . . .

As always, S. asked that the words in each line be pronounced distinctly, with slight pauses between words—his one requirement for converting meaningless sound combinations into comprehensible images. And, of course, he was able to use his technique and reproduce several stanzas of *The Divine Comedy,* not only with perfect accuracy of recall, but with the exact stress and pronunciation. Moreover, the test session took place fifteen years after he had memorized these stanzas; and, as usual, he was not forewarned about it.

The following is his account of the methods he used to implement his recall.

[*First line*]

(*Nel*)—I was paying my membership dues when there, in the corridor, I caught sight of the ballerina Nel'skaya.

(*mezzo*)—I myself am a violinist; what I do is to set up an image of a man, together with [Russian: *vmeste*] Nel'skaya, who is playing the violin.

(*del*)—There's a pack of Deli Cigarettes near them.

(*cammin*)—I set up an image of a fireplace [Russian: *kamin*] close by.

(*di*)—Then I see a hand pointing toward a door [Russian: *dver*].

(*nostra*)—I see a nose [Russian: *nos*]; a man has tripped and, in falling, gotten his nose pinched in the doorway (*tra*).

(*vita*)—He lifts his leg over the threshold, for a child is lying there, that is, a sign of life—vitalism.

[*Second line*]

(*Mi*)—Here I set up an image of a Jew who comes out with the remark: "We had nothing to do with it."[1]

(*ritrovai*): (*ri*)—This is some reply to him on the phone.

(*tru-*)—But since the receiver [Russian: *trubka*] is transparent, it disappears.

(*vai*)—What I see then is an old Jewish woman running off screaming "*Vai!*"

(*per*)—I see her father [*per*] driving along in a cab near the corner of Lubyanka.

(*una*)—But there on the corner of Sukharevka I see a policeman on duty, his bearing so stiff he looks like the figure 1.

(*selva*)—I set up a platform next to him on which Silva is dancing. But just to make sure I won't make a mistake and think this is Silva, I have the stage boards under the platform crack (which gives me the sound *e*).

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[1] He evokes an image of a Jew whose Yiddish accent alters the pronunciation of the Russian *mwi* ("we"), rendering it "mi." [Tr.]

(*oscura*)—I see a shaft [Russian: *os*] jutting out from the platform pointing in the direction of a hen [Russian: *kuritsa*].

[*Third line*]

(*Che*)—This might be a Chinaman: *cha, chen.*[2]

(*la*)—Next to him I set up an image of his wife, a Parisian.

(*diritta*)—This turns out to be my assistant Margarita.

(*via*)—It is she who says "*via*" [Russian: *vasha*, "your"] and holds out her hand to me.

(*era*)—Really, the things that can happen to a man in this life; he lives a whole "era."

(*smarrita*): (*sma*)—I see a streetcar, a bottle of champagne next to the driver. Behind him sits a Jew wearing a tallith and reciting the *Shmah Israel;* that's where the *sma* comes in. But there's also his daughter (Rita).

[*Fourth line*]

(*Ah*)—*Ahi* in Yiddish means "aha!" So I place a man in the square outside the streetcar who begins to sneeze—*apchkhi!* With this the Yiddish letters *a* and *h* suddenly appear.

(*quanto*)—Here I use a piano with white keys instead of a quint.

(*a dir*)—Here I'm carried back to Torzhok, to my room with the piano, where I see my father-in-law. He says: *Dir!* [Yiddish: "you"]. As for the *a,* I simply put an *a* on the table in the room. But since it's a white sound it's lost in the white of the tablecloth. (That's why I didn't remember it.)

(*qual era*)—I see a man on horseback, dressed in an Italian mantle—a cavalier. But just so I won't add any sounds that weren't in the Italian, I make a stream of champagne out of my father-in-law's leg: "Era" Champagne.

(*è*)—This I get out of a line from Gogol: "Who said 'eh'?"—Bobchinsky and Dobchinsky.

(*cosa*)—"It was their servant who saw the goat" [Russian: *koza*].

(*dura*)—"They said to it: 'What do you think you're butting into, you fool [Russian: *dura*]?' "

We could go on and quote at length from this particular record, but the above should suffice to indicate the methods of recall that S. employed. One would think a chaotic conglomeration of images such as this would only complicate the job of remembering the four lines of the poem. Yet S. could take these lines, which were written in a language he did not understand, and in a matter of minutes compose images that he could "read" off, thus reproducing the verse exactly as he had heard it. (And he could manage, also, to repeat the performance fifteen years later, from memory.) There can be no doubt that the devices he describes here were essential to his recall.

Translated by Lynn Solotaroff

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[2] The Italian word *che* had been read incorrectly as having a soft sound. [Tr.]

Jorge Luis Borges

Funes the Memorious

I remember him (I have no right to utter this sacred verb, only one man on earth had that right and he is dead) with a dark passion flower in his hand, seeing it as no one has ever seen it, though he might look at it from the twilight of dawn till that of evening, a whole lifetime. I remember him, with his face taciturn and Indian-like and singularly *remote,* behind the cigarette. I remember (I think) his angular, leather-braiding hands. I remember near those hands a maté gourd bearing the Uruguayan coat of arms; I remember a yellow screen with a vague lake landscape in the window of his house. I clearly remember his voice: the slow, resentful, nasal voice of the old-time dweller of the suburbs, without the Italian sibilants we have today. I never saw him more than three times; the last was in 1887 . . . I find it very satisfactory that all those who knew him should write about him; my testimony will perhaps be the shortest and no doubt the poorest, but not the most impartial in the volume you will edit. My deplorable status as an Argentine will prevent me from indulging in a dithyramb, an obligatory genre in Uruguay whenever the subject is an Uruguayan. *Highbrow, city slicker, dude:* Funes never spoke these injurious words, but I am sufficiently certain I represented for him those misfortunes. Pedro Leandro Ipuche has written that Funes was a precursor of the supermen, "a vernacular and rustic Zarathustra"; I shall not debate the point, but one should not forget that he was also a kid from Fray Bentos, with certain incurable limitations.

My first memory of Funes is very perspicuous. I can see him on an afternoon in March or February of the year 1884. My father, that year, had taken me to spend the summer in Fray Bentos. I was returning from the San Francisco ranch with my cousin Bernardo Haedo. We were singing as we rode along and being on horseback was not the only circumstance determining my happiness. After a sultry day, an enormous slate-colored storm had hidden the sky. It was urged on by a southern wind, the trees were already going wild; I was afraid (I was hopeful) that the elemental rain would take us by surprise in the open. We were running a kind of race with the storm. We entered an alleyway that sank down between two very high brick sidewalks. It had suddenly got dark; I heard some rapid and almost secret footsteps up above; I raised my eyes and saw a boy running along the narrow and broken path as if it were a narrow and broken wall. I remember his baggy gaucho trousers, his rope-soled shoes, I remember the cigarette in his hard face, against the now limitless storm cloud. Bernardo cried to him unexpectedly: "What time is it, Ireneo?" Without consulting the sky, without stopping, he replied: "It's four minutes to eight, young Bernardo Juan Francisco." His voice was shrill, mocking.

I am so unperceptive that the dialogue I have just related would not have attracted my attention had it not been stressed by my cousin, who (I believe) was prompted by a certain local pride and the desire to show that he was indifferent to the other's tripartite reply.

He told me the fellow in the alleyway was one Ireneo Funes, known for certain peculiarities such as avoiding contact with people and always knowing what time it was, like a clock. He added that he was the son of the ironing woman in town, María Clementina Funes, and that some people said his father was a doctor at the meat packers, an Englishman by the name of O'Connor, and others that he was a horse tamer or scout from the Salto district. He lived with his mother, around the corner from the Laureles house.

During the years eighty-five and eighty-six we spent the summer in Montevideo. In eighty-seven I returned to Fray Bentos. I asked, as was natural, about all my acquaintances and, finally, about the "chronometrical" Funes. I was told he had been thrown by a half-tamed horse on the San Francisco ranch and was left hopelessly paralyzed. I remember the sensation of uneasy magic the news produced in me: the only time I had seen him, we were returning from San Francisco on horseback and he was running along a high place; this fact, told me by my cousin Bernardo, had much of the quality of a dream made up of previous elements. I was told he never moved from his cot, with his eyes fixed on the fig tree in the back or on a spider web. In the afternoons, he would let himself be brought out to the window. He carried his pride to the point of acting as if the blow that had felled him were beneficial . . . Twice I saw him behind the iron grating of the window, which harshly emphasized his condition as a perpetual prisoner: once, motionless, with his eyes closed; another time, again motionless, absorbed in the contemplation of a fragrant sprig of santonica.

Not without a certain vaingloriousness, I had begun at that time my methodical study of Latin. My valise contained the *De viris illustribus* of Lhomond, Quicherat's *Thesaurus,* the commentaries of Julius Caesar and an odd volume of Pliny's *Naturalis historia,* which then exceeded (and still exceeds) my moderate virtues as a Latinist. Everything becomes public in a small town; Ireneo, in his house on the outskirts, did not take long to learn of the arrival of these anomalous books. He sent me a flowery and ceremonious letter in which he recalled our encounter, unfortunately brief, "on the seventh day of February of the year 1884," praised the glorious services my uncle Gregorio Haedo, deceased that same year, "had rendered to our two nations in the valiant battle of Ituzaingó" and requested the loan of any one of my volumes, accompanied by a dictionary "for the proper intelligence of the original text, for I am as yet ignorant of Latin." He promised to return them to me in good condition, almost immediately. His handwriting was perfect, very sharply outlined; his orthography, of the type favored by Andrés Bello: *i* for *y*, *j* for *g*. At first I naturally feared a joke. My cousins assured me that was not the case, that these were peculiarities of Ireneo. I did not know whether to attribute to insolence, ignorance or stupidity the idea that the arduous Latin tongue should require no other instrument than a dictionary; to disillusion him fully, I sent him the *Gradus ad Parnassum* of Quicherat and the work by Pliny.

On the fourteenth of February, I received a telegram from Buenos Aires saying I should return immediately, because my father was "not at all well." May God forgive me; the prestige of being the recipient of an urgent telegram, the desire to communicate to all Fray Bentos the contradiction between the negative form of the message and the peremptory adverb, the temptation to dramatize my suffering, affecting a virile stoicism, perhaps distracted me from all possibility of real sorrow. When I packed my valise, I noticed the *Gradus* and the first volume of the *Naturalis historia* were missing. The *Saturn* was sailing the next day, in the morning; that night, after supper, I headed towards Funes' house. I was astonished to find the evening no less oppressive than the day had been.

At the respectable little house, Funes' mother opened the door for me.

She told me Ireneo was in the back room and I should not be surprised to find him in the dark, because he knew how to pass the idle hours without lighting the candle. I crossed the tile patio, the little passageway; I reached the second patio. There was a grape arbor; the darkness seemed complete to me. I suddenly heard Ireneo's high-pitched, mocking voice. His voice was speaking in Latin; his voice (which came from the darkness) was articulating with morose delight a speech or prayer or incantation. The Roman syllables resounded in the earthen patio; my fear took them to be indecipherable, interminable; afterwards, in the enormous dialogue of that night, I learned they formed the first paragraph of the twenty-fourth chapter of the seventh book of the *Naturalis historia.* The subject of that chapter is memory; the last words were *ut nihil non iisdem verbis redderetur auditum.*

Without the slightest change of voice, Ireneo told me to come in. He was on his cot, smoking. It seems to me I did not see his face until dawn; I believe I recall the intermittent glow of his cigarette. The room smelled vaguely of dampness. I sat down; I repeated the story about the telegram and my father's illness.

I now arrive at the most difficult point in my story. This story (it is well the reader know it by now) has no other plot than that dialogue which took place half a century ago. I shall not try to reproduce the words, which are now irrecoverable. I prefer to summarize with veracity the many things Ireneo told me. The indirect style is remote and weak; I know I am sacrificing the efficacy of my narrative; my readers should imagine for themselves the hesitant periods which overwhelmed me that night.

Ireneo began by enumerating, in Latin and in Spanish, the cases of prodigious memory recorded in the *Naturalis historia:* Cyrus, king of the Persians, who could call every soldier in his armies by name; Mithridates Eupator, who administered the law in the twenty-two languages of his empire; Simonides, inventor of the science of mnemonics; Metrodorus, who practiced the art of faithfully repeating what he had heard only once. In obvious good faith, Ireneo was amazed that such cases be considered amazing. He told me that before that rainy afternoon when the blue-gray horse threw him, he had been what all humans are: blind, deaf, addlebrained, absent-minded. (I tried to remind him of his exact perception of time, his memory for proper names; he paid no attention to me.) For nineteen years he had lived as one in a dream: he looked without seeing, listened without hearing, forgetting everything, almost everything. When he fell, he became unconscious; when he came to, the present was almost intolerable in its richness and sharpness, as were his most distant and trivial memories. Somewhat later he learned that he was paralyzed. The fact scarcely interested him. He reasoned (he felt) that his immobility was a minimum price to pay. Now his perception and his memory were infallible.

We, at one glance, can perceive three glasses on a table; Funes, all the leaves and tendrils and fruit that make up a grape vine. He knew by heart the forms of the southern clouds at dawn on the 30th of April, 1882, and could compare them in his memory with the mottled streaks on a book in Spanish binding he had only seen once and with the outlines of the foam raised by an oar in the Río Negro the night before the Quebracho uprising. These memories were not simple ones; each visual image was linked to muscular sensations, thermal sensations, etc. He could reconstruct all his dreams, all his half-dreams. Two or three times he had reconstructed a whole day; he never hesitated, but each reconstruction had required a whole day. He told me: "I alone have more memories than all mankind has probably had since the world has been the world." And again: "My dreams are like you people's waking hours." And again, toward dawn: "My memory, sir, is like a garbage heap." A circle drawn on a blackboard, a right triangle, a lozenge—all these are forms we can fully and intuitively grasp; Ireneo could do the same with the stormy mane of a pony, with a herd of cattle on a hill, with the changing fire and its innumerable ashes, with the many faces of a dead man throughout a long wake. I don't know how many stars he could see in the sky.

These things he told me; neither then nor later have I ever placed them in doubt. In those days there were no cinemas or phonographs; nevertheless, it is odd and even incredible that no one ever performed an experiment with Funes. The truth is that we live out our lives putting off all that can be put off; perhaps we all know deep down that we are immortal and that sooner or later all men will do and know all things.

Out of the darkness, Funes' voice went on talking to me.

He told me that in 1886 he had invented an original system of numbering and that in a very few days he had gone beyond the twenty-four-thousand mark. He had not written it down, since anything he thought of once would never be lost to him. His first stimulus was, I think, his discomfort at the fact that the famous thirty-three gauchos of Uruguayan history should require two signs and two words, in place of a single word and a single sign. He then applied this absurd principle to the other numbers. In place of seven thousand thirteen, he would say (for example) *Máximo Pérez;* in place of seven thousand fourteen, *The Railroad;* other numbers were *Luis Melián Lafinur, Olimar, sulphur, the reins, the whale, the gas, the caldron, Napoleon, Agustín de Vedia.* In place of five hundred, he would say *nine.* Each word had a particular sign, a kind of mark; the last in the series were very complicated . . . I tried to explain to him that this rhapsody of incoherent terms was precisely the opposite of a system of numbers. I told him that saying 365 meant saying three hundreds, six tens, five ones, an analysis which is not found in the "numbers" *The Negro Timoteo* or *meat blanket.* Funes did not understand me or refused to understand me.

Locke, in the seventeenth century, postulated (and rejected) an impossible language in which each individual thing, each stone, each bird and each branch, would have its own name; Funes once projected an analogous language, but discarded it because it seemed too general to him, too ambiguous. In fact, Funes remembered not only every leaf of every tree of every wood, but also every one of the times he had perceived or imagined it. He decided to reduce each of his past days to some seventy thousand memories, which would then be defined by means of ciphers. He was dissuaded from this by two considerations: his awareness that the task was interminable, his awareness that it was useless. He thought that by the hour of his death he would not even have finished classifying all the memories of his childhood.

The two projects I have indicated (an infinite vocabulary for the natural series of numbers, a useless mental catalogue of all the images of his memory) are senseless, but they betray a certain stammering grandeur. They permit us to glimpse or infer the nature of Funes' vertiginous world. He was, let us not forget, almost incapable of ideas of a general, Platonic sort. Not only was it difficult for him to comprehend that the generic symbol *dog* embraces so many unlike individuals of diverse size and form; it bothered him that the dog at three fourteen (seen from the side) should have the same name as the dog at three fifteen (seen from the front). His own face in the mirror, his own hands, surprised him every time he saw them. Swift relates that the emperor of Lilliput could discern the movement of the minute hand; Funes could continuously discern the tranquil advances of corruption, of decay, of fatigue. He could note the progress of death, of dampness. He was the solitary and lucid spectator of a multiform, instantaneous and almost intolerably precise world. Babylon, London and New York have overwhelmed with their ferocious splendor the imaginations of men; no one, in their populous towers or their urgent avenues, has felt the heat and pressure of a reality as indefatigable as that which day and night converged upon the hapless Ireneo, in his poor South American suburb. It was very difficult for him to sleep. To sleep is to turn one's mind from the world; Funes, lying on his back on his cot in the shadows, could imagine every crevice and every molding in the sharply defined houses surrounding him. (I repeat that the least important of his memories was more minute and more vivid than our perception of physical pleasure or physical torment.) Towards the east, along a stretch not yet divided into blocks, there were new houses, unknown to Funes. He imagined them to be black, compact, made of homogeneous darkness; in that direction he would turn his face in order to sleep. He would also imagine himself at the bottom of the river, rocked and annihilated by the current.

With no effort, he had learned English, French, Portuguese and Latin. I suspect, however, that he was not very capable of thought. To think is to forget differences, generalize, make abstractions. In the teeming world of Funes, there were only details, almost immediate in their presence.

The wary light of dawn entered the earthen patio.

Then I saw the face belonging to the voice that had spoken all night long. Ireneo was nineteen years old; he had been born in 1868; he seemed to me as monumental as bronze, more ancient than Egypt, older than the prophecies and the pyramids. I thought that each of my words (that each of my movements) would persist in his implacable memory; I was benumbed by the fear of multiplying useless gestures.

Ireneo Funes died in 1889, of congestion of the lungs.

Translated by James E. Irby

Part Four

Letters to Words

Cosmology

From the afflatus of the flea to the Divine thunderclap, the large and the small are linked in affirmative concord. What is above is below, joined in the Epicurean void by a chain of being, an eruption through the vacancy. Cosmology seeks the likeness in disproportionate elements: "The earth's alphabet mirrors heaven's and shares the fate of language." It is not surprising to find that language partakes of the cosmic as much as it is governed by it. The heavens comprise not only an angelic space but also a celestial writing. As a constellated canopy, the night sky provides the basis for the celestial alphabets recorded by Ibn Wahshih (ca. 840 A.D.*), Cornelius Agrippa, Athanasius Kircher, and certain Kabbalistic treatises. Significantly, the writing systems thus generated derive from antecedent "readings" of the night sky as connected, imaginary lines linking stellar configurations into a form of text. (For a visualization, see Wilkins's cryptographic design from* Mercury, *in "Transpositions," p. 228 above). Writing constellates the sky, returning our reflections to the etymology of that Greek word* kosmos*: an embellishment of matter, whence cosmetic. It is as if a textual potential, an ability to organize the sky as script, recovers the extraterrestrial for human comprehension. In his lexicon novel* Dictionary of the Khazars, *Milorad Pavić provides a cosmological note on Adam Cadmon, the primordial man, proposing a radical dichotomy between divine and human language. The borderline between the two precisely marks the differentiation of nouns from verbs—verbs being divine, nouns circulating solely among humans. The divine language manifests in dreams, the secular in waking states. The alphabet itself partakes of duality and correspondence. To every person belongs a single letter of the alphabet, and the letters taken all together constitute the terrestrial body of Adam Cadmon.*

To the late medieval mind the book metaphor has a basic function: to link word and world through pansemiosis. It is God's will to be revealed in both the Bible and the Book of Nature. Francis Quarles expresses this bibliocentric vision in the following lines:

The world's a book in folio, printed all
With God's great works in letters capital:
Each creature is a page; and each effect
A fair character, void of all defect.

For Paracelsus the firmament is "another book of physic" from which a firmamental meaning is to be spelled out, and pilgrimage is envisioned as a turning of earth's pages with our feet. Galileo views the universe as the great book "written in a mathematical language, and the characters are triangles, circles, and other geometrical figures."

In Jewish mysticism we find a variant predilection: a nonbibliocentric obsession with alphabetic characters and their powers. In Kabbalah (which simply means “tradition”) occurs a fundamental fusion of cosmology and language; a conjoint theory. Kabbalah transmits three practices involving letters. Gematria *is a numerology of letters, based on the fact that the Hebrew alphabet assigns a numerical equivalent to each letter. (A similar numerological emanation is elaborated in the Gnostic text by Marcus, the follower of Valentinus.) The combinatorial possibilities are obvious; and each word, in addition to having a semantic content, also signifies a numerical sum. Significant correspondences can then be established between words whose letters total the same sum. A second technique is* Notarikon, *which involves the acrostic techniques of abbreviation, substitution, and permutation. Notarikon deals with cipher and decipherment, overlapping with the practice of cryptography outside the compass of religion (in military and political communications, for instance). The third strategy is* Temurah, *the art of anagrams, particularly viewed as the imponderable permutations of divine creation. Pico della Mirandola calls Temurah “a revolutio alphabetaria.” Conceived as continuous with divine creation, Temurah reveals an exponential calculus exceeding the scope of human endeavor, anticipating our contemporary supercomputers.*[1]

The three Kabbalistic procedures are based on a cosmology in which language interpenetrates the world. A basic proposition is that letters are the stones or building blocks of the temple, the vessel of light. While in most accounts letters were taken to be instruments of the creation, the concept of malbush *envisions the divine robe woven of letters preceding the material creation. The ancient literature of the Hekhalot and the Merkavah also subscribes to a view of letters as intrinsic to the divine retinue. The Hebraic prohibition on revealing the name of God reflects this sense of the primordial character of language. Creation is the actualization of divinity through a process of linguistic autorepresentation. Creation and revelation amount to the same thing. St. Augustine came to an identical equation: “God has written two books, the book of creation and the book of redemption.” If reality is language and language reality—if the two are not just structurally homologous, but part of a continuous fabric—the issue for Kabbalah is one of legitimate use. In the Book of Creation,* Sefer Yetsirah, *language is simultaneously archetype and prima materia, or raw stuff. The world is consequent upon a divine immersion in lettristic plenitude. For Abraham Abulafia’s ecstatic aspirations, a clue is given in the numerical identity (obtained by Gematria) of the words* lashon *(language) and* zeruf *(combination), each totaling 368.*

In Borges’s story “The Handwriting of God” (Kabbalistically inclined as is much in Borges) the imprisoned magician Tzinacán contemplates what kind of sentence an absolute mind would construct. Surely a divine sentence would proclaim explicitly and instantaneously an infinite connection of facts. He concludes however that the sentence is superfluous to divinity. He recognizes the universe as the semantic perpetuation of an infinite design as readily expressed by random words as by grammar or syllogism—a design embodied by a jaguar pacing in the adjacent cage. The jaguars and other predators inflict “horror upon pastures and flocks in order to perpetuate a design” in a kind of dermagraphic carnage. To apprehend the design is to intuit the eventual interconnection of everything. Language is a *combinatorial system, just as the world is; and humans are privileged to approach the divinity through participation in the divine gesture of lettristic commingling and confederation.*

In the Kabbalah, Hebrew is a "corporeal articulation of the divine overflow." The plasticity of language is commensurate with the fecundity of the divine fiat. *Language in Kabbalah, then, may be: (1) a technique of mystical striving; (2) an instrument of creation that is at the same time a component of the created world; (3) a structural homology between the mundane and the divine, and the locus of an encounter between macrocosm and microcosm; and (4) a talisman, or receptacle, for collecting divine emanations. The emphasis on the written text is predominant in Kabbalah, as it is in Judaism in general; but the Abulafian school of ecstatic Kabbalah engages the acoustic dimension of language in ways that bring it into alliance with recitation techniques and sonorous iconography common to Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist mysticism. Hebraic "maggidism," automatic speech, derives visionary motivation from chance homophonies as the adept strives to attain that state in which "'the words of* Torah *were shining in us and the words were* spoken of themselves.'"

The close parallel of Gematria to the Hermetic tradition (as found in Ficino, for instance) and more recently to Baudelaire's poetics of correspondence should be remarked, as well as an emphasis upon alogical combinations of semantic-numerical units that are in precise accordance with Reverdy's theory of the poetic image:

> The image is a pure creation of the mind.
>
> It cannot be born from a comparison but from a juxtaposition of two more or less distant realities.
>
> The more the relationship between the two juxtaposed realities is distant and true, the stronger the image will be—the greater its emotional power and poetic reality.

The principle of correspondence posits the crossing of an intermediary space, a space that can become troublesome to figuration the moment it is apprehended as something other than the neutral backdrop or support on which signs, words, and thoughts converge. One response to space figured as intimidating supplement is in the "inexpressibility topos" whereby "language establishes the very terms for the ideals that require transcendence of language." If it is words that summon up the void, the antidote is to purge or overcome words as such.

Language accrues meaning as a deus absconditus *gains divinity, or in Maurice Blanchot's phrasing "Language perceives that it owes its meaning, not to what exists, but to its recoil before existence." What Blanchot grants to language here is what Isaac Luria attributes to divine praxis: an action of contraction rather than emanation. Scholem calls this paradoxical doctrine of* zimzum *(withdrawal) "one of the most amazing and far-reaching conceptions ever put forward in the whole history of Kabbalism." In a cosmogonic moment God contracts in order to make possible the existence of the universe. The Lurianic conception makes it possible to conceive creation as not only* making *but* erasing, *which* *brings the notion of plenitude closer to the comparably enabling thought of nothingness in Buddhism or the "pure zero" of C. S. Peirce's semiotic metaphysics. It has proven vitally stimulating to the poetic theories of Harold Bloom as well, who traces homologous alliances between zimzum, the Epicurean plummet of atoms through the void (as well as the Lucretian clinamen or swerve—see Part Five), Valentinian gnosis, and the Miltonic sublime: "Like Milton's Satan in his fall from the Godhead, a fall that opens up a new Sublime, Negative creation in the abyss, so the Valentinian creation/fall brings about a Sublime and Negative cosmos, with the difference that the Gnostic fall is* within *the Godhead, and not just* from *it." Bloom's cosmogonic syncretism is also inflected by Emersonian transcendentalism, so his theory of poetic freedom supplements the Gnostic "negation" and "evasion" with a third term, "extravagance": the audacious creation of freedom "out of and by a catastrophe." (The redemptive thought of exile as a way of gaining space and time—the restorative dimension necessary for imaginal recuperation—is compatible with, if not indebted to, Derrida's notion of* différance *as difference and deferral.) Here the principle of cosmological lettrism is given an apocalyptic rendering in Boehme's* Mysterium Magnum, *in which the Christian principle of the savior is elaborated in a Kabbalistic context of number symbolism and a Gnostic scenario of primeval malignancy—a vision of epic struggle in which the letters of the alphabet are potentates of warring factions. Mutilation of the divine script need not be a martial affair, however, as Christian doctrines of devotional errancy attest. J. G. Hamann, for instance, who held that language was God's gift not man's prerogative, assaults the experimental method of the scientists as an effacement of the "text of Nature," which he likens to reading the* Iliad *after having "sifted out the two vowels alpha and omega."*[2]

An enduring aptitude of the mystical disposition is to conceive an absolute complementarity of word and world. The famous assertion that there is nothing outside the text is hardly to be attributed to Derrida alone, so pervasive is it in visionary cosmology. Russian Symbolist poet Andrey Bely is even more emphatic: "If words did not exist, then neither would the world itself." In Bely's vision of "The Magic of Words," language is that medium through which subjective and objective states interpenetrate and, in doing so, constitute each other through reciprocal differentiation.

> "I" and the "world" arise only in the process of their union in sound. . . . Thus consciousness, nature, and the world emerge for the cognizing subject only when he is able to create a designation. Outside of speech there is neither nature, world, nor cognizing subject. In the word is given the original act of creation. The word connects the speechless, invisible world swarming in the subconscious depths of my individual consciousness with the speechless, senseless world swarming outside my individual ego. . . . The word is a symbol. It is the intelligible union of two unintelligible essences.

Bely's summary, it is worth noting, is close to the Buddhist doctrine of codependent arising; and that, in turn, is implicitly elaborated in Spencer Brown's discussion of form (see "Clinamen," p. 549 below).

The union of self and cosmos given in the signifier can also be represented as rupture, fracture, schism—an eruptive signification: "The symbol originates in the split of existence, the confrontation and communication of an inner with an outer reality, whereby a meaning detaches itself from sheer existence." Detachment in turn offers the alternatives of exile or shelter, and both are inflected with divine transaction. The deity felt internally as the precipitating force of creation can be an auditory hallucination, as in Julian Jaynes's theory of the bicameral mind: "The gods were organizations of the central nervous system and can be regarded as personae in the sense of poignant consistencies through time, amalgams of parental or admonitory images." In Jaynes's hypothesis, language precedes consciousness, and is associated initially with the promptings of gods. Language is preliminary to ego formation, which requires difference or distinction as a requisite prelude to consciousness, a concept signified grammatologically by spacing.

The medieval preoccupation with space as both an aid to memory and a vehicle of intelligibility underlies Juan de Celaya's transmutation of the spoken word into an irreducibly graphic space. Celaya's elaborate spatial display (a descendant of the schematic tree of differential classification devised by the third-century Neoplatonist Porphyry and inspired by comparable achievements in Lefèvre d'Etaples's Grammatography*), indicates a geometric logic, replacing a linear syllogistic presentation with a quantified logic in space. Ratiocination gains emancipation from the temporal insistence of linear syntax to achieve a static display in a cosmic autonomy. Logic enters a controlled and dazzling spatial complexity that is not dissimilar to Lem's description of an "'n-body of Abstractions' assimilated semantically by a machine—[in which it] can be seen as a whole if that abstract creation is put into the requisite electron appliance (a semascope)": "Visually, the 'body of abstractions' nestled in its conceptual continuum appears as a complicated, many-shelled, aperiodic, and variably synchronous mass, woven of 'burning threads'—that is, billions of 'significant curves.' These curves together yield the plane of cuttings of the semantic continuum."*

*Cosmic space continues as a fecund metaphor in twentieth-century works such as Eugen Gomringer's "constellations" and Pierre and Ilse Garnier's "spatialiste" texts. In a clear alternative to other innovative poets (Ezra Pound and Haroldo de Campos, for instance) whose rethinking of Western poetics has been along ideogrammatic lines, Gomringer and the Garniers propose the page and syntax as a motivated space designed to contain particular verbal clusters organized by play-activity (*Denkgegenstanddenkspiel*). By a simplification of poetic structures Gomringer works toward a cosmological alignment. The poem ceases to be a representational artifact and becomes a reality in itself. Pierre Garnier educes the cosmological framework for his spatial texts in the following passage from his "Manifesto for a New Poetry": "What is important is the meaning, the space the word takes up on the page, the vibrations that they [sic] cause, their volume, the vast horizontal of F-E-R the disturbing aspect of infinity of A-V-I-O-N. What a difference there is between 'the tiger is coming to drink at the river' and the single name: T Y G E R. For those who know how to look at them, some words possess a remarkable topography." In their different ways Garnier and Gomringer both retroactively evoke and* *transpose those verbal qualities Picard finds in the Old Testament where "words seem to have just dug themselves out into the light; a trace of the original darkness is still in the light; a silence is still in the language; the language is still wholly turned in on itself, dazzled by its own light."*

The dazzle of a cosmic script carries an erotic force, a devotional plastic intensity. As objects, words enter into ritual as well as commercial circulation. Sexual identity, labor, conflict, and social stratification all serve to requisition people as linguistic operatives. The artifactual consequence of the divine gift of the Word is made explicit in the Dogon myth of the Nummo and the anthill recorded by Marcel Griaule and included here. The tale identifies the origin of language with a primal act of sexual modesty, concretizing as kinship ritual the Gnostic mystery of speech. The Dogon understand linguistic propagation as sexual event. The disseminative capacity of the word is similarly evoked by the Russian Futurist Kamensky, for whom the letter heralds "the impregnation of the world."

Free from the speculative lure of the ideogram, Velimir Khlebnikov explores a nether cosmos of mimophony (scratch the Futurist and you find Plato's Cratylus). Yet Khlebnikov's Adamic fantasies and wild acoustograms are not regressive but rather celebrate a glissando down semantic change to nest in the determinisms of letter-sounds. As "A Checklist: The Alphabet of the Mind" clearly demonstrates, Khlebnikov's is one of the most creative and original exploitations of language's sedimentary condition. Tynyanov astutely describes the poet's complex visionary telos:

> Khlebnikov's new vision, which blended the small with the large in pagan and childlike fashion, was not reconciled with the fact that the most important and ultimate thing does not fall to the solid and dense language of literature, that this principal thing, with its minute-by-minute significance, is pushed aside by the "packaging" of literary language and declared a "chance feature." And it is this chance feature that has become for Khlebnikov the element of his art.

Cosmology is not a container but a constant predication of the new. As Khlebnikov reminds us, language is fundamentally a double system in which the poet enacts an interstitial play between conceptual and verbal states with the consequent production of neology.

There is a thwarted yet determined interiority involved when cosmology announces itself as the symbol of a cathecting psyche where cortical nodes assert themselves as aspects of other worlds. Schreber's cosmology (in "Mania," p. 301 above) is a powerful instance of such disinvagination, unfolding from an awareness of the clamor of signifying microparticles. His receptivity (to bird messengers, sentence fragments, and homonyms) pauses, perched at that juncture where understanding hesitates between macro- and microsemiosis. Paranoiac hesitation and schizophrenic conflation are modes of psychic arrest, states in which the ratio of word to world is either undecidable or unstable. But they are also portents of "normality" as itself a psychosis of language. The linguistic perspectivism theorized by Whorf and Sapir, in a certain light, acquires a carceral dimension. "A picture held us captive," writes Witt-

genstein, "and we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably." This claustrophobic, Sisyphean image is accurate: constant repetition embeds the language in us, or us in it. "It always appears to us that the operations of experience codified in our language follow the very articulations of being, because it is through them that we relate to being. Wishing to think language, that is, to reduce it to the state of an object before thought, we always risk treating those operations through which our language tries to determine being as an intuition of the being of language." As Merleau-Ponty thus expresses it, the relation of language to being is tautological. "Reason is language, logos. *This is the marrow bone at which I shall gnaw and gnaw until I die of it," said Hamann, electing piety as the resolution of this problematic indistinction of reason and language; for others, it is the ultimate nihilistic taint not only of reason but of the cosmos as a whole. The desolation of entrapment in a rogue signifying system is the legacy of Manichean beliefs in the natural world as perversion of divine energy; and the dream of communicative transparency and instrumental reason can never after shake itself free of its irrational obverse, language. The adventure of unlimited semiosis culminates in Athanasius Kircher's grand diagram of overinscription, where signal reverts to noise and the proliferation of motivated links between concepts fills the available space with blackness as in a reversion to void.*

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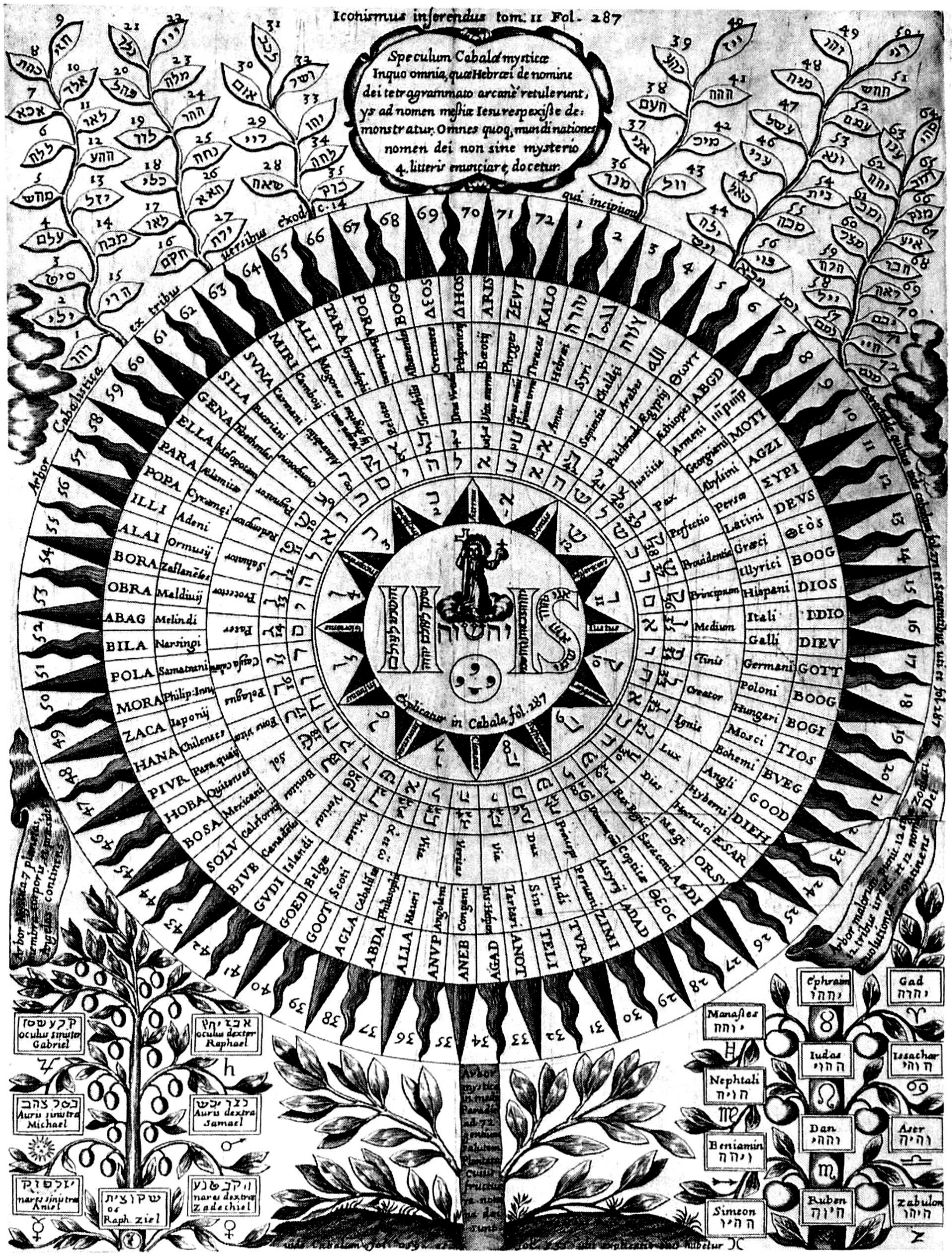
1 The Jewish legend of an artificial being is reenvisioned in Stanislav Lem's story "Golem" as a supercomputer (see *Imaginary Magnitude*).

2 Hamann also wrote an "Apology of the Letter H" in defense of that aspirate consonant that has been periodically criticized as extraneous and undeserving of alphabetic status. Hamann takes the H as the aspirate of spirit, as does Melville in *Moby-Dick* when, in the etymological extracts preceding the novel, he cites Hackluyt's remark that "the letter H . . . almost alone maketh up the signification of the word [whale]."

Athanasius Kircher

The 72 Names of God


Iconismus inſerendus tom. II Fol. 287
Speculum Cabalæ mysticæ
Inquo omnia, quæ Hebræi de nomine
dei tetragrammato arcanè retulerunt,
ys ad nomen meſſiæ Iesu respexiſſe de:
monstratur. Omnes quoq, mundi nationes
nomen dei non sine mysterio
4. litteris enunciare, docetur.
qui incipiunt
Arbor Cabalistica ex tribus versibus exod c. 14
Explicatur in Cabala fol. 287
IHS
יהשוה
BOGO
ΔEOS
ΔHOS
ARIS
ZEVT
KALO
ABGD
MOTI
AGZI
ΣΥΡΙ
DEUS
ΘEOS
BOOG
DIOS
IDDIO
DIEV
GOTT
BOOG
BOGI
TIOS
BVEG
GOOD
DIEH
ESAR
ORSY
ABDI
ΘEOC
ADAD
ZIMI
TVRA
TELI
ANOI
AGAD
ANEB
ANVP
ALLA
ABDA
AGLA
GOOT
GOED
GVDI
BIVB
SOLY
BOSA
HOBA
PIVR
HANA
ZACA
MORA
POLA
BILA
ABAG
OBRA
BORA
ALAI
ILLI
POPA
PARA
ELLA
GENA
SILA
SVNA
MIRI
ALLI
DARA
PORA
Latini
Græci
Illyrici
Hispani
Itali
Galli
Germani
Poloni
Hungari
Angli
oculus sinister Gabriel
oculus dexter Raphael
Auris sinistra Michael
Auris dextra Samael
nares sinistra Aniel
os Raph. ziel
nares dextra Zadechiel
Ephraim
Gad
Manaſſes
Iudas
Isachar
Nephtali
Dan
Aser
Beniamin
Simeon
Ruben
Zabulon

Marcus the Valentinian

Gnostic sects proliferated through the early centuries of Christianity, but it is misleading to suggest any doctrinal consistency among them. Gnostic cosmologies syncretized Christian dogma, Jewish mysticism, and pagan myth and ritual. The Valentinians were the most prominent of the Gnostic groups in the second century, but conceptual synopsis is made awkward in this case because, as Irenaeus (bishop of Lyons) complained of Valentinus's followers, "Every day every one of them invents something new, and none of them is considered perfect unless he is productive in this way." However, as Hans Jonas indicates, such poetic fertility was germane to Valentinian cosmology, which heretically supposed the world to be the result of a divine error—or at least a swerve from first principles (like the clinamen *of Lucretius: see "Clinamen," p. 539 below)—conceiving the creative potential of individual gnosis in the grandest terms as "the inverse equivalent of the pre-cosmic universal event of divine* ignorance, *and in its redeeming effect of the same ontological order. The actualization of knowledge in the person is at the same time an act in the general ground of being." Most of our information about Marcus derives from Irenaeus, who vilified him as a predatory cult figure. This prejudicial intent, however, does not obscure Irenaeus's fastidious transmission of Marcus's complex letter and number mysticism, which in our extract recapitulates the biblical Genesis as lettristic revelation. The "Sige" referred to here means "Silence," and is one of the thirty Aions that radiate from the Pleroma or primordial fullness (other Aions include Nous or mind, and Logos or word). Letter mysticism of this order is more pervasive in Kabbalah than in Gnosticism, but a German compiler, Wolfgang Schultz (see the introduction to Hugo Ball in "Sound Effects," p. 108 above), includes in addition to Marcus an anonymous text that recapitulates the seven traditional planets in a numerically pregnant tabulation of the Greek vowels:*

ΑΕΗΙΟΥΩ
ΕΗΙΟΥΩ
ΗΙΟΥΩ
ΙΟΥΩ
ΟΥΩ
ΥΩ
Ω
ΩΥ
ΩΥΟ
ΩΥΟΙ
ΩΥΟΙΗ
ΩΥΟΙΗΕ
ΩΥΟΙΗΕΑ

When the inconceivable Patron, without paternity, neither male nor female, willed utterance from himself of that which was ineffable, giving form to that which was invisible, he sent forth from his mouth a word similar to himself. The first word of his name was "beginning" [*Arche*], a word of four elements [*stoicheion*]. The second word also held four elements. The next word was composed of ten elements. The following consisted of twelve. The whole name contained thirty elements [letters] and four utterances [syllables]. Each element has its own letters, form, pronunciation, appearance, and images, but none of them perceives the form of that which contains it. Nor does it notice the articulation of its neighbor. Each believes that what it expresses is the whole. Every element is part of the whole and with its own sound indicates the whole, and does not stop resounding until every letter of its own element has been uttered. The restitution of everything will occur when the whole shivers down to the part and the part echoes the sound of the whole. The image of that utterance is the "Amen" proclaimed in unison by all. The sounds themselves, on the other hand, which have given form to the immaterial and unborn *aion,* are what the Lord calls angels, those who continually behold the face of the Patron (Matthew 18:10). The utterable and common names for the elements are known as *aions,* words, roots, seeds, *pleroma,* and fruits.

The final letter of every element lifted up its voice and a sound went forth propagating in turn its own element in the image of the previous elements. On this ground the precondition and the world itself were realized. The letter, its echo compounded by the echo below, rejoined itself in its own syllable in completion of the whole. But the echo lingered in exile. The element from which the spoken letter descended consisted of thirty letters, and every one of these letters contained other letters, each expressing the name of the letter originally uttered; and each of these letters in turn holds a volume of letters expressing the same, begetting others; so the number of letters reverberates into infinity.

Consider an example. The element "Delta" consists of D, E, L, T, A, each of which is designated by other letters (D by *d-e-l-t-a,* E by *e-p-s-i-l-o-n* and so forth). If the composition DELTA extends to infinity—letters producing more letters in perpetual succession—imagine how imponderable the entire ocean of letters must be, considering the magnitude of just that one. And if a single element is infinite, consider again the immensity of the name of which the Patron is composed. Because he knew he was imponderable, the Patron provided the elements, which he also calls *aions,* as powers with which each may bound an utterance for lack of uttering the whole.

After this exposition the Tetrad declared: "I would reveal to you Truth herself, descended from the empyrean so that you may see her naked beauty revealed and, hearing her speak, marvel at her wisdom. Behold:

her head	Α Ω
her neck	Β Ψ
her shoulders and hands	Γ Χ
her breasts	Δ Φ
her belly	Ε Υ
her back	Ζ Τ

her sex	Η Σ
her thighs	Θ Ρ
her knees	Ι Π
her calves	Κ Ο
her ankles	Λ Ξ
her feet	Μ Ν

This is the body of Truth, the form of the element, and character of the letter. This element is 'Whoman' and declares itself the source of all speech, anchor of every sound, the speech of the unspeakable, and mouth of the silent Sige. Such is her body. But exalt your thought and hear the self-begotten Word, pregnanced by the Patron and borne by the mouth of Truth."

Adapted by Jed Rasula

Anonymous

Sefer Yetsirah

Chapter I

§ 1
Thirty-two mysterious ways of wisdom has the Lord, Lord of hosts, ordained through Scribe, Script, and Scroll.

§ 2
These are the thirty-two mysterious ways of wisdom, twenty-two letters, which are ten double and twelve simple.

§ 3
The ten double letters are א, ב, ג, ד, ו, כ, פ, ר, ש, ת, ten and not nine, ten and not eleven. The twelve simple letters are ט, י, ל, מ, נ, ס, ע, צ, ק, ה, ז, ח, twelve and not eleven; twelve and not thirteen. Investigate them, examine them, establish the matter clearly, and restore the Creator to His abode.

§ 4
Twenty-two letters are engraved by the voice, hewn out in the air, and established by the mouth in five places.

§ 5
Twenty-two letters He engraved, hewed out, weighed, changed, combined, and formed out of them all existing forms, and all forms that may in the future be called into existence.

§ 6
How did He combine them, weigh them, and change them around? א, with all of them and all of them with א; ב,, with all of them and all of them with ב; and so forth, all of them turning around in order; thus all words and all forms are derived from them.

§ 7
Twenty-two letters are engraved in a circle, with 484 divisions, and the circle turns forward and backward; thus in ענג [delight], the ע is at the beginning; in נגע [plague], the ע is at the end.

§ 8
Out of two stones two houses are built, out of three stones six houses are built, out of four stones twenty-four houses are built, out of five stones one hundred and twenty houses are built, out of six stones seven hundred and twenty houses are built, out of seven stones five thousand and forty houses are built. Go and count further, what the mouth is unable to pronounce, and the ear is unable to hear.

Chapter II

§ 9
He combines and changes about and makes all forms and all words with the One Name; thus all forms and all words are derived from the One Name.

§ 10

Three vowels אמש constitute a great secret, marvellous and hidden. From them go forth air, water, and fire. Fire above and water below, and air holds the balance between them; thus מ is mute, ש is hissing, and א holds the balance between them.

§ 11

Three vowels אמ״ת constitute a great secret, mysterious and hidden. From them go forth air, water, and earth. Four vowels אמשת, which are five vowels, that gave birth to twenty-seven consonants.

§ 12

The five vowels stand each one by itself, but the twenty-seven consonants are all dependent on the vowels. He made them in the form of a state, and arranged them like an army in battle array. The only One Master, God, the faithful King, rules over them from His holy abode forever and ever.

§ 13

The five vowels and twenty-seven consonants, these are the twenty-two letters which the Lord, Lord of hosts, established out of the ten digits and zero.

Chapter III

§ 14

The ten digits and zero—close thy mouth from speaking and thy heart from thinking, and if thy heart should leap, bring it back to its place; for concerning this has the covenant been made.

§ 15

The ten digits and zero, their end is joined with their beginning, and their beginning with their end, as the flame is attached to the coal. Understand wisdom and be wise in understanding, that there is but one Master, and there is no second to Him, and before One, what countest thou?

§ 16

The ten digits and zero, their appearance is like lightning; to their aim there is no limit. They go and come at His word, and at His command they pursue like the whirlwind, and kneel before His throne.

§ 17

These are the ten digits and zero, with which the Eternally Living God, blessed be His name, ordained His world.

§ 18

One—He graved and hewed out of it voice, air and speech, and this is the Holy Spirit.

§ 19

Two—He graved and hewed out of them void and chaos. Void is a green line that surrounds the whole universe, and chaos refers to viscous stones, sunk in the abyss, whence water comes forth.

§ 20

Three—He graved and hewed out of them mud and clay. He arranged them like a garden bed. He set them up like a wall. He covered them like a pavement, and poured upon them snow, and the earth was formed.

§ 21

Four—He graved and hewed out of them the throne of glory, the ophanim, the seraphim, the holy animals, and the ministering angels.

§ 22

He formed existence out of void, something out of nothing, and he hewed large stones out of intangible air, thus twenty-two in number, one in spirit.

§ 23

Also God set the one over against the other, good against evil, and evil against good; good out of good, and evil out of evil; good testing evil, and evil testing good; good is stored away for the good, and evil is stored away for the evil.

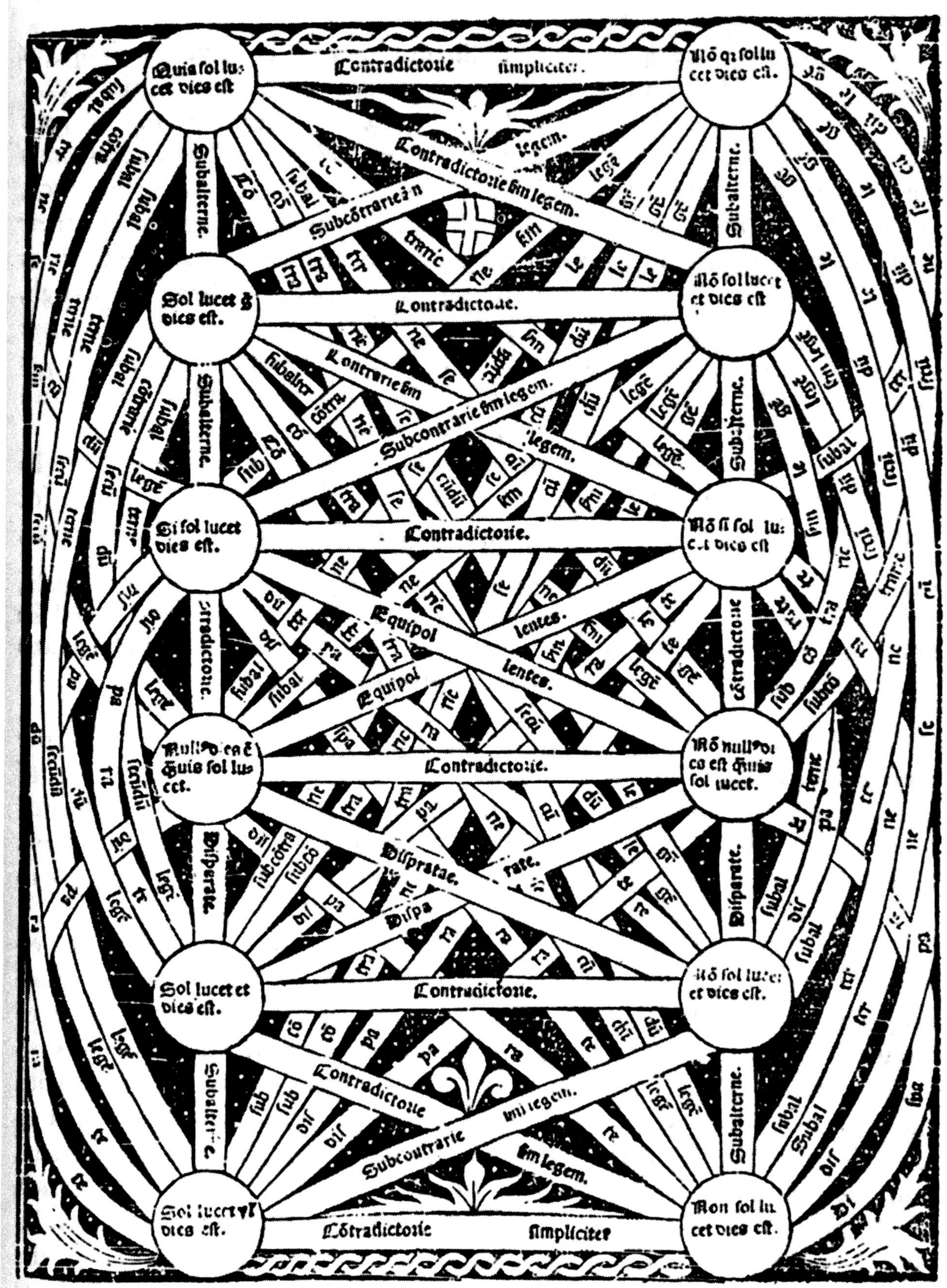
§ 24

When Abraham our father arose, he looked and saw and investigated and observed and engraved and hewed and combined and formed and calculated, and his creation was successful. Then the Master of all revealed Himself to him, and made a covenant with him and with his seed forever. He made a covenant with him on the ten fingers of his hands, and this is the covenant of the tongue; and on the ten toes of his feet, and this is the covenant of circumcision; and tied the twenty-two letters of the Torah to his tongue and revealed to him their secret. He drew them through water; stormed through air, He kindled them in fire, and melted them into ten double and twelve simple letters.

Translated by Phineas Mordell

Juan de Celaya

In this diagram from Exposition . . . in primum tractatum Summularum Magistri Petri Hispani *(1525), Celaya attempts a geometrical presentation of logic. The ostensible subject is the compound proposition "The sun shines and it is day." In Walter Ong's view such skull-breaking diagrams were made possible by the reproductive facility of the printing press, anatomizing in geometric form thought processes that the mind itself could not grasp. The exponential enhancement of such extraneural circuitry is now commonly delegated to computers; but in visual form its limit is exemplified by Athanasius Kircher's chart, at the end of this section, "Epilogismus Combinationis Linearis" from* Ars Magna Sciendi *(1669), which Umberto Eco also reproduces in his novel* Foucault's Pendulum *to suggest the futility of overzealous esoteric theorizing.*


Quia sol lu-cet dies est
Nō qz sol lu-cet dies est.
Contradictorie simpliciter.
Contradictorie sm legem.
Subcōtrarie sm legem.
Subalterne.
Sol lucet & dies est.
Nō sol lucet et dies est
Contradictorie.
Contrarie sm legem.
Subcontrarie sm legem.
Si sol lucet dies est.
Nō si sol lu-cet dies est
Contradictorie.
Equipollentes.
Nullus dies est quia sol lu-cet.
Nō nullus dies est quia sol lucet.
Contradictorie.
Disparate.
Disparatae.
Sol lucet et dies est.
Nō sol lucet et dies est.
Contradictorie.
Contradictorie sm legem.
Subcontrarie sm legem.
Sol lucet vel dies est.
Non sol lu-cet dies est.
Cōtradictorie simpliciter

Jacob Boehme

From *Mysterium Magnum*

The Language of Nature

6. Adam's spiritual holy stem grew until his fall, and there it stood still; and then the Word freely gave itself by the Covenant thereinto, as into a disappeared [expired] ens, to regenerate it again in its true entity; and the outward natural stem obtained the power and the self-growing life, in the fall, where then the elements, each of them in its property, became sensible and full of its own self-full power and operation, and grew so unto the flood, especially before the flood, in its boughs and branches, and did shew itself as a full-grown tree, according to all the properties in evil and good.

7. But the powers had not as yet unfolded and explicated themselves therein, for all men had only one language; the languages were not made manifest out of the properties before the flood.

8. They indeed understood the Language of Nature, viz. the formed word in its difference; but this difference or distinct variety was not as yet formed and framed into tongues, until the stock of the human tree, did, after the flood, bring its power into the branches. Whereupon the tree of mankind began to bloom and blossom forth out of the properties of the powers of the formed natural word, viz. out of the blessing, wherewith God blessed Noah and his children, viz. the branches of the tree, and bade them be fruitful, and fill and replenish the earth, and gave them the Covenant of grace.

9. For in Cain this tree was cursed, but in Noah it was again blessed, that the properties of the formed natural word should put forth themselves with the tongues through the property of nature, as a wonder of many words or gods in the only living Word.

. . .

12. . . .When the powers were couched in one property in the stock, then men did understand the Language of Nature, for all languages did lie therein; but when this tree of the one only tongue did divide itself in its properties and powers among the children of Nimrod, then the Language of Nature (whence Adam gave names to all things, naming each from its property) did cease, and the stem of nature became faint, feeble and weak, by reason of the divided properties in the word of the powerful understanding.

. . .

16. For seventy-seven is the whole number of the divine manifestation through the formed word; seventy-two, are Babel, viz. the tongues of the wonders; the other five are holy, and lie hidden under the seventy-two, and they take their original out of JOTH, and the JOTH standeth in the ①, viz. in the One, which is the eye of eternity without ground and number.

. . .

18. The five speeches belong to the spirit of God, who speaketh by his children, when and how he pleaseth, but the seventy-two belong to man's selfness and particular ownhood, whence man's self-full understanding speaketh lies and truth. Therefore the seventy-two languages, viz. Babel, must pass through the judgment of God, and the pure shall be separated from the impure, and tried in the fire.

. . .

49. The spirits of the letters in the Alphabet are the form of the one spirit in the Language of Nature; the five vowels bear forth the holy tongue of the five holy

languages out of the name Jehovah, from whence the Holy Spirit speaketh; for the five vowels are the holy name of God, according to his holiness. For the name Jehova hath nothing in it, save only the five vowels A, E, I, O, V. The other letters signify and express the nature, even what the name of God in the formed word is in nature, both in love and anger, in darkness and light. But the five vowels do signify only and alone what he is in the light of holiness; for nature is tinctured with the five vowels, so that it becomes full of joy and delight.

50. But that the ancient wise men, skilful in this tongue, did interpose an H in the name JEOVA, and called it JEHOVA, the same was done with great understanding, for the H maketh the holy name with the five vowels even manifest in the outward nature. It sheweth how the holy name of God doth breath forth and manifest itself even in the creature. The five vowels are the hidden name of God, who dwelleth alone in himself; but the H signifieth the divine lubet or wisdom, shewing how the divine lubet doth breath forth itself out of itself.

51. The inward understanding in the five vowels is this:

I is the name JESUS.
E is the name *Engel* (Angel).
O is the formed WISDOM or lubet or the I, viz. of JESUS, and is the centre or the HEART of God.
V is the SPIRIT, viz. the SUS in JESUS, which proceedeth forth out of the lubet.
A is *der Anfang und das Ende* (the beginning and the end), viz. the will of the whole comprehension, and it is the FATHER.

52. And these five do fold themselves up with the comprehension or formation into three, viz. into such a Word, △/, that is, A, O, V, Father, Son, Holy Ghost. The triangle denotes the Trinity of the properties of the Persons, and the V on the triangle denotes the spirit in the H, viz. in the breathing, where the universal God doth manifest himself spiritually with his own proceeding forth or procession out of himself.

53. The other letters without the five vowels, do all proceed from the name TETRAGRAMMATON, viz. out of the centre of the eternal nature, out of the Principle; and do denote and speak forth the differences of the formed wisdom, viz. of the formed word in the three Principles, wherein the whole creation lieth; they are the sense of the creation, viz. the property of the powers, and the true revealed God in the word of nature. Understand this further thus:

54. When as the lubet of man, viz. the free will of man, doth conceive or form itself into a desire, then it conceiveth the whole Alphabet; for the desire is the Fiat, and the lubet to the desire, is the contemplation of the free will, viz. the formed word of wisdom, wherein the free will doth behold itself, and contemplate whereinto it will introduce the lubet of the wisdom, either into evil or good; and when the free will hath thus beheld itself, it doth conceive with the lubet in the letters, viz. in the sense of nature, and composeth the senses of the letters together, and formeth the lubet into a word; the same standeth in an internal form, viz. in a conceived thought.

55. And even then the free will taketh the H, viz. the spirit of the forth-breathing, and bringeth the formed thought before the counsel of the five senses, who behold the formed word, and prove the same, whether it be apt or not; if it doth but please them, then the H, viz. the breathing spirit, taketh the word, and brings it upon the tongue into the mouth; there is the chief framer, viz. the Fiat, which is the divine instrument, and figureth the senses of the properties out of the letters, as the free will hath set and composed them into a

substance to the sounding or pronouncing, manifestation or expression.

56. Now mark and observe us here, very exactly; how every word is formed or brought in the mouth to substance, viz. to the expression; how the chief worker and contriver, viz. the Fiat which is in the senses, doth shape and figure it; and how the tongue co-operates or frames itself therewith, when it takes it; and by what way it brings it forth, whether through the teeth, or above, or with open mouth; also how the tongue doth frame itself in the conjunction of the word; which sense it doth again draw back, and will not wholly cast forth, as there is many a sense which is not half put forth, but many, fully, and many again are drawn half backwards towards the heart. And now as the word was formed, so is also the thing in its form and property which is named by the word, (provided that the free will giveth it also a right name, and doth not impose a strange name on it, out of malice or ignorance); so it is externally noted, and internally in the compaction of the senses it hath such a virtue, or ill malignant property.

57. Now whosoever hath the understanding of the senses, viz. of the spirits of the letters, so that he doth understand how the senses are set or compounded in the lubet, he understands it in the framing of the word, when the same is formed or brought forth to substance; and is able to understand the sensual [natural or essential] language of the whole creation, and understands whence Adam gave names unto all things; and from whence the spirit of God hath prophesied in the Ancient.

58. This is now the ground of the head languages. When as all people spake in one language, then they understood one another. But when they would not use the natural genuine tongue; then the true and right understanding was put out in them; for they brought the spirits of the genuine tongue of sense into an external gross form, and framed the subtle spirit of the understanding into a gross form, and learnt to speak out of the form only; as at this day all nations speak only from this same form of their contrived sensual tongue.

59. Now no people do any more understand the language of sense, and yet the birds in the air, and the beasts in the fields, understand it according to their property.

. . .

62. The five holy speeches in the language of sense are God's Word; they are his operation through the sense tongue, viz. through the properties; as it cannot be denied that God giveth power, virtue and life to all creatures and vegetables, for his holy name is through all. And Adam had this holy name as a proper possession, working, ruling and sensibly efficacious in his senses; and even this jewel he lost; which is now again restored and enkindled in the holy name JESUS.

63. Therefore none can with right be called a divine, or learned in the holy Scripture, much less a doctor of the same, unless that he understands the sensual tongue, and knows how the Holy Spirit hath spoken by the sensual tongue in the holy Scripture, let him not undertake to be a master over it, to censure or interpret it, he is not at all learned therein; he is only a changer of letters [a chop-logic in the Scriptures], and understands not one letter in its sense.

. . .

68. The hidden mystery of the Tower, and the divided languages, is this: Mankind had framed the sensual language of the holy Spirit into a dumb form; and used the formed word of the human understanding, only in a form, as in a contrived vessel or vehiculum; they spake only with the outward contrived vessel, and understood not the word in its own proper language of sense; they understood not that God was in the speak-

ing Word of the understanding; as at this day the like comes to pass, and is.

Beneath the Languages and Tower of Babel

4. This tower, on which the tongues were divided, and where the great city, Babel, stood, is a figure of the fallen earthly man who is entered into selfhood, and hath made the formed word of God in him unto an idol; for the nature of the tower was even this, viz. that it should there stand as a great wonder, which men had made in their own contriving fancy, whereupon they would ascend up to God; and signifies that man hath lost the right understanding of God, and his habitation and essence.

5. Man had compacted [or framed] his understanding, through the desire of self-elevation and exaltation into the sensual tongue, and contrived or conceived the same into a selfly propriety, in which conception or comprehension the spirit of the mental tongue of the five vowels was departed from him.

6. Not that we are to conceive, that this spirit was departed from its creature; only the free will of man had, in the formed word of the consonants (wherein the spirit of the five vowels, viz. the unformed Spirit of God, did manifest itself) brought itself forth, as a peculiar god, out of the resignation to the unformed Spirit, into a self-fullness and self-willed weening and fancy; the type whereof was the tower, where the men of Babel would come and climb up to God in their own conceived will and thoughts. This denotes and declares the divided tongues, where every property had brought itself forth out of the universal sensual tongue into a selfishness and a peculiar selfly understanding, so that they did not any longer understand one another; where the understanding was compacted and brought into a propriety out of and according to the three alphabets.

7. This compacted formed tongue the Holy Ghost did open on the day of Pentecost in St Peter's sermon, where Peter, from the opened sensual tongue, spake in one language all languages; and this was also Adam's language, whence he gave names to all creatures.

. . .

39. The compacted sensual tongue, which is divided in the spirits of the letters, doth make us to err; so that we do suppose we are strange one to another; and yet we are all but one only tree, which the devil hath poisoned with his desire in Adam, so that we speak from many speeches; that is, we have introduced the powerful word of God into the multiplicity of the divided properties; and have made, in each tongue's property, a selfhood, or a selfish desire to arrogation, self-apprehension and assumption.

. . .

42. We have lost the five vowels in the Alphabet; which do introduce all the spirits of the letters into one pure harmony; and the five vowels are as 'twere senseless or dumb, in reference to the other letters; and yet they are the life of the rest, for there cannot any word be formed but there must be a vowel.

. . .

45. The letters, viz. the properties of the sensual tongue, have introduced themselves into an external form, or self-full will and understanding, and brought themselves with the vowels into a compaction [self-comprehension or particular formation]. And when this was done, then JESUS, viz. the holy name JEOVA, died [or disappeared] in the sensual tongue in the letters with the five vowels of the one only holy mental tongue; that is, the spiritual man, which was resigned in [and to] God, died to the divine understanding and will.

46. Now there is a self-willed beast of selfishness and ownhood brought forth out of the spirit of the other letters, which doth only kill, and bring forth dead fruit.

For Paul saith, *the letter killeth, but the spirit maketh alive* (2 Cor. iii. 6). Understand this thus:

47. The divided sensual tongue killeth us, sets us at odds and variance, and leads us into Babel. But the spirit of the vowels, viz. the holy name of God, doth again revive and quicken us in him. Therefore the holy word of the five vowels did again (when as the spirits of the letters were divided and brought into the selfhood of the wonders of God) espouse and incorporate itself forthwith in Paradise with the precious Covenant, into the letter, viz. into the natural man; for to manifest itself again with a motion in the compacted tongue, and to introduce the holy sense again into the sensual tongue.

48. Thus understand us aright: The literal form in the sensual tongue is now the evil beast, which will domineer in its own power. Now into this evil beast the spirit of the five vowels, viz. the name JEHOVAH (which with the H, hath breathed the JESUS thereinto) hath given in itself, and killed the evil beast, viz. the self-will, and hath again tinctured the spirits of the letter, viz. the right natural man, with the tincture of the holy name of the vowels, or JEHSUS; and with the love hath slain the death or deaths in the letters, and destroyed their self-will; so that the spirits of the letters cannot any more introduce themselves into a self-full compaction of the sensual tongue; for they are dead in their own will; and the spirit JEHOVAH in JESUS is become their life; so that they live no longer to their selfhood, viz. to the nature of the wrath; but in that they live, they live to God (Rom. vi. II).

49. Thus now the beast of the whore is in us outwardly, viz. in the mortal man; and inwardly is Christ in the immortal man, who is passed through the death of the letters and hath turned the death into life (John v. 24).

. . .

51. For this is the great beast of the Babylonical whore in us: that we bring ourselves into the images and forms of the letters; and make opinions to ourselves: that opinion is a beast.

52. Also we must not desire to know and will, ourselves; but die continually with our own self-will; and in all things give God the honour; and give him again that which he giveth us, viz. whatsoever understanding, wisdom and skill we have; and acknowledge that it is not our own, but that the divine sun shineth out of and through us, and worketh in us as it pleaseth.

. . .

75. For if the Antichrist dieth in the soul, then Christ ariseth from death; for he resteth in the five vowels in his grave, viz. in the mental tongue, which died in Adam, and lieth captive in Antichrist. When this same ariseth from death in the mental tongue, and is made alive, then he openeth all the treasures of the heavenly wisdom in the sensual tongue; so that man doth far more clearly understand the spirits of the letters, viz. the formed word of nature, in all the three Principles, than he did before in the Antichristian whore's child.

. . .

85. For the speech and understanding of man doth not befall him from the stars and elements; for then other creatures could also speak and understand: Man hath the same, originally, from the incorporated formed Word of God; it is the name of God, which he must not abuse, upon pain of eternal punishment. This incorporated Word man hath, out of all the three Principles, in himself; and hath a free-own-peculiar-will to form a substance out of which Principle he will; and thereupon also follows the separation, and reaping in, of every thing into its receptable [or appointed place].

Translated by John Sparrow

Edna Sarah Beardsley

Unlike particle physics, hydraulic engineering, or neurological malady, language is a topic eminently available to amateur speculation. With an etymological dictionary and a thesaurus anyone can produce a cosmological vindication of linguistic variety and change. Examples abound in this anthology (see Marcus, Boehme, and Khlebnikov in "Cosmology," Kallir and Vertus in "Alphabetic Dimensions," Brisset, Hopkins, and Jones in "Retentions and Secretions"). Edna Beardsley's The Word *is a sterling example of homegrown linguistic conjecture. We have been unable to find any information about her, nor have we come across a single reference to her book, discovered by chance in a San Francisco bookstore, the city in which it was printed in 1958. No publisher is indicated, so we surmise that* The Word *was produced by its author. The subtitle indicates Beardsley's orientation:* A literology or science of literate characters; a psychology or logic of The Logos (Soul); a word analysis or word treatise. *The book anatomizes 110 words, of which we offer two. Others range (in Beardsley's alphabetical presentation) from Abortion, Affinity, and Angel through Consider, Courage, Gospel, Influence, Intuition, and Love to Mars, Mynde, Occultness, Remorse, Suggestion, Universe, and Wisdom, culminating in Woman.*

Character; Letter

The Word, *Character*

The word *character* comes from a Greek form meaning to engrave, to make sharp (pointed, decisive, keen, incisive, acute, well defined or fine pointed).

There was a time when records were engraved upon stone, with sharp instruments. These records or these writings were made by the use of graphic symbols or characters or letters or literate characters engraved, infixed, marked or indelibly imprinted upon or into the stone slab or tablet or table, or even upon stone walls.

The Anglo Saxon *grafan* means to dig, as in the words engrave, groove, graver, graft, grave and grub, and *graf* which means grove (a small wood).

Literal meaning: that which is engraved, stamped, inscribed, written, marked or imprinted; an engraved mark.

Common meaning: a sign, symbol or graphic token; a signal or insignia, emblem or distinguishing feature that identifies, classifies or indicates origin; a graphic symbol of any sort; quality or distinguishing feature.

The root of each word establishes its character, for it is of the same nature, temper, constitution or genius. The root is an independent entity. The character is a dependent entity; a manifestation of its root. It is of like nature or of peculiar constitution attributable to its root. The properties of a character must agree with its word root, as a property of that word root and as offspring expressing it by its noticeable likeness to it. The word speaks. The literate characters give the sound and substance.

The numeral characters speak of quantity, while the literate characters speak of quality. Both are ideate beings—component parts of ideas speaking for themselves.

As the keys on the piano key-board speak for themselves, as the middle c, the d, the f-sharp, the b and the b-flat have their places, and their tones, and their specific characters in the music world, so do literate and numeral characters have their power to speak for themselves.

In the realm of *literology* we find that letters speak for themselves, and that they dictate their own specific places in a word; that they give tone, sound, and euphony, while in the realm of mathematics we find that place is evenly as vital.

There is another relationship existing between the letters that indicate tones (in music) and the letters that indicate sound in words, or the figures that indicate quantity in mathematics. It is the fact that harmony is produced when tone, key, place and positive rules are observed, and that when such rules are disregarded, discord and mistakes are produced.

Words may be called compound characters made up of literate characters. Numeral characters (figures or symbols) have their places in columns (as in a ledger) and their positions give them degree as to value.

Words have degrees, positions or classifications which give them literacy according to their vowels, their other letter construction, or according to the adjectives that qualify them. Thus a sentence, a row of figures, or a row of notes upon their staff speak for themselves. The sentence speaks by means of literate characters, words, phrases, or literate composition of words. The row of figures speaks by means of position based upon the unit. The character 1 is highly important. It signifies the whole unit. The zero is important, not because of its amount or high value import, but because of its essential position in relation to the unit. The figure zero (0) is neither zero plus nor zero minus, but simply the character that denotes naught, nothing, the cipher or that which is empty; denotes the absence of quantity. Yet when the zero appears at the left or at the right of a numeral character it has meaning, according to its position in the column or in relation to the unit or units, which units do have degree, quantity, value or specific amount of plus value. For instance, the zero placed on the right of the unit forms 10—the sum next greater than nine. This cipher indicates no degree of and no fraction of a unit, yet when it is placed in certain position it occupies that column position to indicate nothing (in that column) and thus it is dependent upon the units for its position and it is altogether dependent upon them for its utility.

It may be said that there are ten numeral characters, figures, tokens, signs, symbols or marks and that there are twenty-six alphabetic characters with which to spell all English words. These words must be classified into positively literate, positively illiterate or negative, and relatively literate groups. They must be classified as to quality, as the following sequences show:

i The most literate characters; those of highest degree of literacy.
ii The literate characters.
iii The relatively literate characters.
iv The relatively illiterate characters.
v The illiterate characters; those of lowest degree of literacy.

The most literate vowels are *i, o, ou,* and *u.*

The most illiterate vowel is *a.*

The most literate consonants and aspirates are *m, n, d, s, p, r, t, l, c,* and *f* or *v* (used interchangeably).

The vowel *i* typifies light, sight, wisdom, discernment, great vision or highest degree of enlightenment.

The vowel *o* typifies greatest capacity. It symbolizes infinity or endlessness. It characterizes eternity or divinely literate continuity.

The *u* vowel opens toward heaven (as does the *v*). It does not depend upon a wide earthly basis or earthy stance as does the illiterate *a* vowel (A).

The *ou* combination of vowels carries both the element or quality of continuity and the element of heavenly or highest intake capacity (as in the word soul).

REALM I DIVINITY: The self-existent Word; The divine creative Root and Origin of all words and literate characters; The infinite Logos; The Source of all logic and science of numeral characters; The Soul of literacy.

REALM II SPIRITUALITY: the divinely worded ideas, verities, qualities, realities and characters; the substance and the essence of The Word; the literate similitude or image of The Word; the divinely graphic words.

REALM III MORALITY: the relatively literate words and characters; the humanly and morally worded sentences, axioms, sentiments and opinions; that which pertains to humanity as to its qualities, characters and conditions, or to that which partakes of moral substance and may be morally substantiated.

REALM IV PHYSICALITY: that which must have physical form and character, rather than metaphysical form and character in order to exist as a word, a sign, a property or an essential thing; that which must have physical and humanly tangible objectification in order to exist as having character; that which substantiates the physical or natural sciences, characterizes human nature, or is that which human nature characterizes; that which signifies physicality.

REALM V IMMORALITY, unmorality or social, civil and ethical depravity; that which has no value, virtue or worth.

In these lower realms there must be a character of human sort. There must be a human physique of familiar pattern to constitute a character. Flesh and bones constitute his prominent and distinguishing features, since he has no moral or spiritual constitution. He characterizes human nature in action; characterizes human impulse; begets blood-ego that carries the mark of fratricide; bears flesh-ego with the mark or stamp of transitoriness (breath in the nostrils). These cursed signs or marks are so deeply engraved upon the human intellect that they hold the whole human race (the *humus-man*) in this cursed character.

The human intellect is actuated by human impulse. It is audient to human meanings. Human knowledge dictates, designs and creates the human nature or tangible character because the *humus-man* physique or the human person (with all of its curses and misfortunes) is most conceivable to humanity as itself.

Spiritual intelligence or wisdom dictates an altogether impersonal, metaphysical character, and three spiritual persons. For instance the Latin *oro* (*orare, oratus*) means I speak, utter, pray. This *I* is the first person or speaker. The Latin *audio* (*audire, auditus*) means I hear. This *I* is the second person; the person or audient character spoken to; the hearer hearing, or understanding, receiving and conceiving. This is the ego (understanding) in action. This is the audient entity functioning as a living (quick) thinker; identifying herself as power of conception, understanding or spiritual audiency. These two persons are present and in action.

The third person is the person spoken of. This person is potential; the idea to be acted upon, realized or brought forth as that which has been set forth by the speaker.

These persons are not people. They are not human creatures, mammals, animals or physical objects. They are spiritual and individual characters, acting as the agents of Speech and of Reason (The Logos; The spoken or written Word).

These persons are animated by Soul, spirited or motivated by Spirit (The Spirit of The Word) and vivified by The vital Principle and Premise of all living characters. They speak with a divinely inspired eloquence. They speak of divine logic, literacy and law. They speak to those characters whose mental matrices are susceptible to divinely logical impressions; those characters whose holy dignity and sentiments stand with and understand The Logos-Speech.

The word constancy means I stand together, with, or wholly. Here constancy is a spiritual character or quality; a fixed, invariable and continually loyal or stable quality or character. Moral stamina carries the same mark among the moral qualities and thus character is engraved upon the heart, the soul, and sentiments. Stamina and constancy take their stance together.

The Greek *grapho* (*graphein*) means I write. This I is the character or quality, moral courage who understands and has learned by heart (by sentiment), and who can give a graphic account, or a vivid record of what he has learned concerning that which is right and equitable for the human race. This character has the ability to judge and the human affection to write what he has demonstrated to be right; has the benevolence to tell or to admonish. These individual characters are wisdom, the power of conception, substance, understanding, reception and fruition standing under or taking stance (spiritual-moral stance) under, and exercising their stamina under that Word and Logos-Soul of which they write. They are the agencies or faculties representing and presenting the logic, the literacy and the law of The Logos.

Words (spoken or written) are entities. Words (thought) are things of a metaphysical, moral or spiritual character. In order to think intelligently one must do so by means of words. Thoughts not put into words are not composed; not put together; not engraved or sharply defined in the individual consciousness or conscience; not stamped upon the tablet of the understanding. Words (spoken or written) are made up of literate characters which have literate, living roots that carry, bear or convey meanings. They speak for one's intuitions. They carry the enthusiasm of The Theos or the logic of true theology (*Soulology*). They put the spiritual and moral instincts into worded form. They record, write, engrave or set forth. They also hear, read, understand and bring forth the substance, essence and character of their Root or of The Logos-Spirit which inspired or gave breath or power of speech.

One of the simplest illustrations of literacy and illiteracy may be found by comparing the word bad to the word good. The letter *b* in bad is illiterate, and the *a* vowel is the most illiterate of the vowels. The letter *g* or *G* as in the word good is highly literate and the double *o* speaks of greatest literate and logical capacity, compounded or doubled.

The word good may not be deformed or degraded. There is no such word as ungood, ingood, disgood or misgood, and no such word as goodless. It stands fully or completely or perfectly good, because it is the most literate or literately capacious name for The Deity—God, Good, or The Logos. There is no better word than Good to contradict it, to deny it, to mutilate its literacy, to dispute its logic or to equal its infinite goodness.

The word intelligence is more literate than the word intellect. The root *lig* is more literate than the root *lect* in the word intellect, since the *i* vowel is of highest literacy while the *e* vowel is relatively illiterate and pertains to human lecture, selection or election. The word intelligence is the logic of Soul and pertains to The Logos.

The word mother may change its form to lowest illiteracy which is matter, by doubling the *t* and substituting the *a* vowel. It goes from motor (to move), mother, miter, measure, meter and then to mater and to matter.

Many words have five degrees of literacy and illiteracy or of classification. The word mother is a universal word. It may be represented in five letter classifications by changing the vowel and doubling the *t*. The mother quickens, motivates, prompts and sustains in every realm from good to bad; from highest to lowest lettered form; from highest Mother to lowest matter.

In the physical realm the animal pater is the pattern character to be engraved upon his offspring. Each animal and each human mammal carries the decisive and well defined pattern of its pater, and the nature or physical mater-ial of its mater.

In the lowest metaphysical or mental realm these patterns, designs, characters, marks or engravings show themselves in patterns and in materials; in that which begets and that mater-ial which bears or carries out or brings forth her mental characteristics. For instance, revenge is engraved upon the mentality or in human memory, or in the inhuman and irrational mentality which is the irrational sense tablet.

Vengeance, envy, animosity and such are the materials out of which revenge, hatred, malice and personal vanity or pride are made. They beget their kind. Physicality begets the human mammal which begets personality or materiality, which begets mortality known as humanity and which is synonymous with humanity—state of being human, mortal or subject to death.

In the moral realm honesty begets his kind and veracity bears out or carries out his kind and her kind, since she is verity, moral intuition or conscience, herself. Here the pater and pattern is moral precept and the mater and material is moral concept. These precepts and concepts are engraved upon the heart or moral sentiment.

In the spiritual realm wisdom is the preceptial (instructive) element. Purity, as the power of true conception (and construction), constitutes the conceptual element. Wisdom marks his own offspring. Spiritual sentiment, intuition or love is the material (substance) out of which they are made.

One may be a man of letters, a man or woman of highest human literacy or degree of literacy, and still be a human character, a person highly educated. He may be a master of one, many or all of the languages spoken by human beings, and still be a human person.

A literate character is not a person. An idea made up of spiritually literate characters is not a person, not a human being. The idea speaks for itself, yet it has no human tongue and is not at all dependent upon the human being (or mammal) for expression. This idea is a *mon* (man) of letters, a *mon* of divine letters, or an expression of spiritual literacy. This idea has its existence in The self-existent and ever-existent Word or Logos.

A morally literate character is not a person. He is an entity identified by his moral integrity, his moral quality, or his conscientious, honest, sincere and veracious character. A morally literate character may not be broken down or caused to disintegrate. His integrity is untouched and unbroken by the illiterate, the morally ignorant, or the human kind of characteristics which do not pertain to moral innateness.

The moral character occupies a realm of his own. He is not literate enough to live in Realm II, but he is too logically and literately minded to live in Realm IV. In his realm (Morality) he has a voice, a value, a power, a place, and a reason for his existence there. In Realm IV there is no place for him, since the physique does not think either morally or immorally, and has no voice in moral and spiritual affairs. It is like the cipher character symbolizing the absence of quantity, yet having neither voice nor value as the following reading will explain: Seven thousand one hundred (7,100). There are two ciphers in the reading, yet they have no voice—no vocal recognition. They occupy space and place, yet they neither speak nor sound forth as literate or as logical characters. Their only use is to occupy a column so as to indicate that nothing (zero, nought) or a cipher—not a unit—is there; so as to indicate the absence of a unit or units.

The character of the *o* vowel is unique. It indicates or it characterizes continuity and infinity. The double *o* vowel in the word good or The Word Good (meaning God) doubles the goodness, emphasizes its continuity and its infinity, and expresses the character of The Deity.

The character of the aspirate *s* is singularly spiritual. And so it is that as a numeral character (such as the zero that means continuity of nothing or infinitely nothing and positively nothing) the cipher or circle means zero, and as a literate character the same character, figure or symbol means something else (such as the vowels in the word good).

The proportion of vowels (highly literate vowels) as in the word spirit, makes the word of highest literacy as though it were double *i*. If we capitalize the word spirit (thus, Spirit) we indicate The Word or The Spirit or The Deity which indicates The Logos—Origin of all literacy; Doctor of all letters; creative Root of all literately perfect, complete, whole or (holy) wholly spiritual words such as soul-wisdom (the wisdom born of Soul); such as soul-sentiment (the sentiment born of Love); such as understanding or the power of divine realization (the power born of The motivating Spirit—Good).

The Word, *Letter*

The word *letter* may be defined as a literate character. A letter may be a writing made up of words which are made up of literate characters or alphabetic characters.

The literate characters have several degrees of literacy. The most literate ones are v or f, c, l, u, o, t, r, p, s, d, n, i, and m. The final *e* is used in all degrees, but it has no literate standing. The most illiterate ones depend upon the *a* vowel and assemble themselves or associate themselves, primarily, without the use of the most literate characters.

Again, the word letter may pertain to that which lets, allows, permits, believes, gives leave, lief or permission. In this sense it takes the form of power, truth, law, a principle or thing in authority. There are several of these degrees of authority.

The following table shows the letter as truth:

REALM I DIVINITY: The divine creative letter—Truth—who conceives, quickens and gives divine form to the ideas specified by The divine creative Intelligence, First Person or Speaker.

Truth—the letter—is The audient One or The Intelligence (person) spoken to.

REALM II SPIRITUALITY: the person spoken of; the percipient and concipient (compound) intelligence or intelligent entities let, given form as true, or given true form as truth or truths, realities, or Truth's legitimate attributes and qualities.

Here truth or true understanding of Truth is the letter.

REALM III MORALITY: honesty, veracity, the science of or pertaining to or belonging to conscience; the verities which substantiate moral science.

Here conscience is the letter who lets, honors, and lets honesty's issues come forth.

She lets or allows him dignity and moral authority as wife—correlative thinker.

REALM IV PHYSICALITY: the feminine element of material knowledge who conceives and lets its issues thrive.

REALM V SUBANIMALITY: the feminine element of mythology or the accomplice (letter) who permits and carries out (gestates), acts upon, and brings forth the offspring of myths or such legends as oppose The Truth or truth.

In the moral realm the letter takes form in moral axioms; in worthy statements of truths; in worded dictations or written dictums involving or embodying a moral precept; in recipes deduced from spiritual principles; in proverbs, words or verbs of action and condition.

These axioms lead, direct, encourage, offer solution, counsel and consolation to the thinker in transit from humanized letting to moralized understanding.

A printed page sets forth the letter of a concept, but the reader must have the zeal, ardor, active interest, or enthusiasm (spirit); must furnish or have the kindred sentiment; must have an innate sense of moral values in order to glean the substance from the axiom, rule, recipe or remedy. The reader must supply the intelligent energy, the heart and the vital properties which animate the letters.

In the great beginning of all creation Moses presents The Logos-Speaker as saying "let" fourteen times in the twenty-four verses.

The Letter to whom The Logos speaks is The divinely concipient Intelligence or Truth Herself; The Holy Ghost of Biblical language; The invisible and humanly intangible Mother-Spirit of logic, science or truth who conceives, quickens, develops and brings forth all things perceived and set forth by The Holy Spirit.

If there were no Letter—no audient One—to hear and to let why should The Speaker entreat, pray, ask, petition or address His audient One so earnestly and repeatedly?

Human intellect has never discovered The true Creator. Human speculation calls him Father as a Christian gesture, but human hypotheses would never embrace such a God only as the unknown *theos* or deity. Spiritual intelligence appreciates and embraces Elohim as The compound God—Speaker and Hearer or Letter. This is the whole God; the holy, wholly infinite.

In the realm of human intellect and knowledge the human physique usurps the spotlight as speaker, hearer, and actor. In this realm there is no end to prayer and petition, and no end to trouble, because the function of the letter—the element that lets or allows—is not clearly defined, and is not at all understood. Hence humanity keeps on praying.

The divine Letter conceives only that which is divine; only that which originates in The Logos-Mynde.

In the realm of human desires, wills, passions, impulses and propensities, humanity finds itself pursuing its own kind of methods and using its own kind of powers—will-power. It works through intrigue and deceit to satisfy envy, jealousy, rivalry, insatiable ambition and greed to answer its own prayers; to let itself.

In this realm the letter (conceiver accomplice) is the passive element. She is without the science of conscience to teach her how to contraceive that which the instigator presents as the active element. His impulses are without patience, compassion, charity, humanity or moral affection.

In Realm III the letter is the recorder. She gives form (permanent letter form) to the moral law. She is verity conceiving veritably and verifying all recipes, formula, remedy and instruction by means of truth (verity) of Realm II. She multiplies the letter to let it speak again and again as moral law prescribing, instructing, directing and reiterating.

In Realm II the letter is truth recording the infinite spiritual substance and essence of wisdom and the law of his high domain, the principles of his practice, the precepts of his perceptions (and her own conceptions), and the premises (drawn from Realm I) from which the compound thinker of Realm II draws real and substantial conclusions.

The letter who conceives and gives import to a potential thing, also carries it, ponders it, or she harbors it in her mentality during its development. This is (mental) prenatal culture. Thus the *sub*-animal nature is a thriving concept nurtured and cultivated in the human mentality.

The letter who conceives and develops the potential perceptions of wisdom or divine logic, gives spiritual import to them and gives them the benefit of the divine (highest) prenatal culture. Thus there are no physical or animal impulses—no human nature—to be restrained; no potential misfortunes to be contraceived or counteracted by this highly intelligent letter—conceiver.

In the realm of human reasoning, the conceiver or letter takes an important part. Her part is one half. Here she represents an intuitive sense for truth or she recognizes a truth, intuitively. Queen Isabella illustrated this fact when (about the year 1492) she believed, beloved, mothered and sustained a fact or truth which Christopher Columbus had proclaimed and maintained.

She is the letter, cooperator, collaborator, coordinator, verifier, demonstrator, and the concipient, or intuitive intelligence which brought forth this fact or brought it into human view and has now caused it to be recorded as an element of fact. But when Columbus said "The Earth is round and I can prove it" he may not have known that he was dependent upon the natural function of the letter who must honor, conceive, gestate, quicken (act upon, mentally), give form, substance and development to his potential and unlettered, or his unconfirmed and uncorroborated (yet factual) perception.

She is the letter who validated and recorded the whole plan. It was, in that day, a miracle because of the hazard of an uncharted, expansive ocean. But since it was intelligently perceived, and heartily conceived, it was mothered into its factual birth and, like an infant child, it was a tangible, perceivable thing. It stands as a mature fact and as a valid thing.

Aleksei Kruchenykh

The most influential of the many Russian avant-garde groups proliferating in the prewar (and prerevolution) years was Hylaea, formed in 1910 and changing its name to Cubo-futurism in 1913. Kruchenykh, Kamensky, and Khlebnikov were three of the founding members, and their fellow Hylaean Vladimir Mayakovsky became the most famous Russian poet of his generation. Their preoccupation with the microparticles of poetry proved influential not only because of their own manifestos, lectures, public readings, and books, but because several participants in their activities—Roman Jakobson, Viktor Shklovsky, and Yuri Tynyanov—subsequently established the theoretical program of Russian formalism, and their early publications lent scientific credibility to Cubo-futurist poetry. Kruchenykh and Khlebnikov preferred to speak of themselves as "wordwrights" rather than poets—a neologism indicative of their experimental research orientation. Kruchenykh coined the term zaum *(for "transrational" language), a concept that for him (in contrast to Khlebnikov) was openly mystical, resonating with Vedantic Yoga and P. D. Ouspensky's* Tertium Organum. *Kruchenykh also invented "shiftology," a practice of segmental deviations that anticipates the Situationist* détournement. *Unlike the Italian Futurists, who celebrated futuristic mechanism and declared the obsolescence of everything past, the Russians adhered to a Slavophile primitivism and nascent mysticism, exemplified by the fact that Kruchenykh's famous poem "Heights (Universal Language)," while superficially abstract, is based on the vowels of the Russian text of the liturgical "Credo." The manifesto "Declaration of the Word as Such," despite its fragmentary appearance, is complete, its numerical disorder comparable to that of William Carlos Williams in* Spring and All.

(4) THOUGHT AND SPEECH CANNOT KEEP UP WITH THE EMOTIONS OF SOMEONE IN A STATE OF INSPIRATION, therefore the artist is free to express himself not only in the common language (concepts), but also in a personal one (the creator is an individual), as well as in a language which does not have any definite meaning (not frozen), a transrational language. Common language binds, free language allows for fuller expression. (Example: go osneg kaid etc.). (5) WORDS DIE, THE WORLD IS ETERNALLY YOUNG. The artist has seen the world in a new way and, like Adam, proceeds to give things his own names. The lily is beautiful, but the word "lily" has been soiled and "raped." Therefore, I call the lily, "euy"—the original purity is reestablished. (2) consonants render everyday reality, nationality, weight—vowels, the opposite: A UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE. Here is a poem exclusively of vowels:

o e a
i e e i
a e e E

(3) a verse presents (unconsciously) several series of vowels and consonants. THESE SERIES CANNOT BE ALTERED. It is better to replace a word with one close in sound than with one close in meaning (bast-cast-ghast). If similar vowels and consonants were replaced by graphic lines, they would form patterns that could not be altered (example: III-I-I-III). For this reason it is IMPOSSIBLE to translate from one language into another; one can only transliterate a poem into Latin letters and provide a word-for-word translation. The verse translations that exist at present are merely word-for-word translations; as aesthetic texts they are nothing more than coarse vandalism. (1) A new verbal form creates a new content, and not vice versa. (6) INTRODUCING NEW WORDS, I bring about a new content WHERE EVERYTHING begins to slip (the conventions of time, space, etc. Here my view coincides with N. Kulbin's, who discovered the 4th dimension: weight, the 5th: motion, and the 6th or 7th: time). (7) In art, there may be unresolved dissonances—"unpleasant to the ear"—because there is dissonance in our soul by which the former are resolved. Example: dyr bul shchyl, etc. (8) All this does not narrow art, but rather opens new horizons.

Translated by Anna Lawton and Herbert Eagle

Heights (Universal Language)

е у ю
и а о
о а
о а е е и е я
о а
е у и е и
и е е
и и ы и е и и ы

Vasily Kamensky

Having failed as a novelist, Kamensky (1884–1961) turned to aviation (giving it up after surviving a crash), and his fame as a pilot lent a certain dignity to the Russian vanguard activities in which he participated—often appearing with an airplane painted on his forehead. Like Kruchenykh and Khlebnikov, Kamensky was a member of the Hylaea group. His special contribution was the production of "ferroconcrete" or visually schematized poems, sharing some affinity with the calligrams of Apollinaire and the words-in-freedom of Marinetti.

Lecture on Word Creation

What is the Letter.

Vasili Kamensky teaches.

The letter is the ideal-concrete symbol of the impregnation of the world (the word)—the shattered flash of lightning, summoning up thunder (the word)—the beginning of a well-spring rushing out of a foothill in order, in headlong confluence with other springs, to form a stream or rivulet (the word) which flows into the glorious movement of a river (thought) down to the ocean of word creation.

The Letter is an explosion, the Word—a flock of explosions.

Each Letter has its own Fate, its own Song, its life, its color, its personality, its path, its odor, its heart, its purpose.

A Letter—this is a completely separate planet of the universe (words are concepts).

A Letter has its own sketch, sound, flight, spirit, its solidity, its rotation.

The born Word is a divine wedding of several pairs or threes of Letters.

The vowel is the wife.

The consonant—the husband.

Consonants are roots of Letters, fathers.

Vowels are movements, growth, motherhood.

The drawn bow of a hunter is a consonant, and the released arrow—a vowel.

Each Letter is a strictly individual world, a symbolic concentration which gives us an exact definition of internal and external essence.

An example is—

YU	YU
YUnochka	Young girl
YUnaya	Young (fem.)
YUno	Youngly
YUnitsya	Juvenates itself
YUnami yunost	By youngs youth
V iyune yunya.	Juvenating in June
YU—kryloveynaya leynaya	—wing-wafted flowing
YU—rozoutraya raya	—rosy-morninged of heaven
YU—nevesta Sta Pesen	—bride of the Hundred Songs
YU—zhena Dnya	—wife of Day

YU i YA. (1916, 18)

If one encounters YU in thousands of words and in any lanaguage—YU always brings a word femininity, sonorality, rosy-morningedness, flexibility, arousal.

The letter *K* gives a word hard-cold-sharp materiality: *koren, klinok, kamen, kirka, kost, suk, kovka, kol, kisten.*

The letter *M* is the call of animals: the mmu of a cow, the mme of a sheep, the meow of a cat, ma-ma the call of a baby, *moya, my, molitva, milaya, primanka*—the feeling of life's warmth.

The letter *O* is a wheel of space [*koleso prostora*], *vozdukh, nebo, vysoko.*

The letter *N* is mysticality: *nekto, nevedomy, noch, nachalo, kanun*—negation: *net, ne, nikogda, nemoy.*

The word OKNO [window] = O + K + N + O = means: space and matter (glass and wood + boundary of night + air = OKNO).

The letter *B*—is a divine-[*bozhestvenno-*] elemental beginning: *bog, bytie, bibliya, byk* (sacred), *budushchee, burya, bedstvie.*

E—den, tsvet, selene, derevo, eley.

A—arka, raduga, mat, au.

R—krov, trud, grom, raskal, ugar.

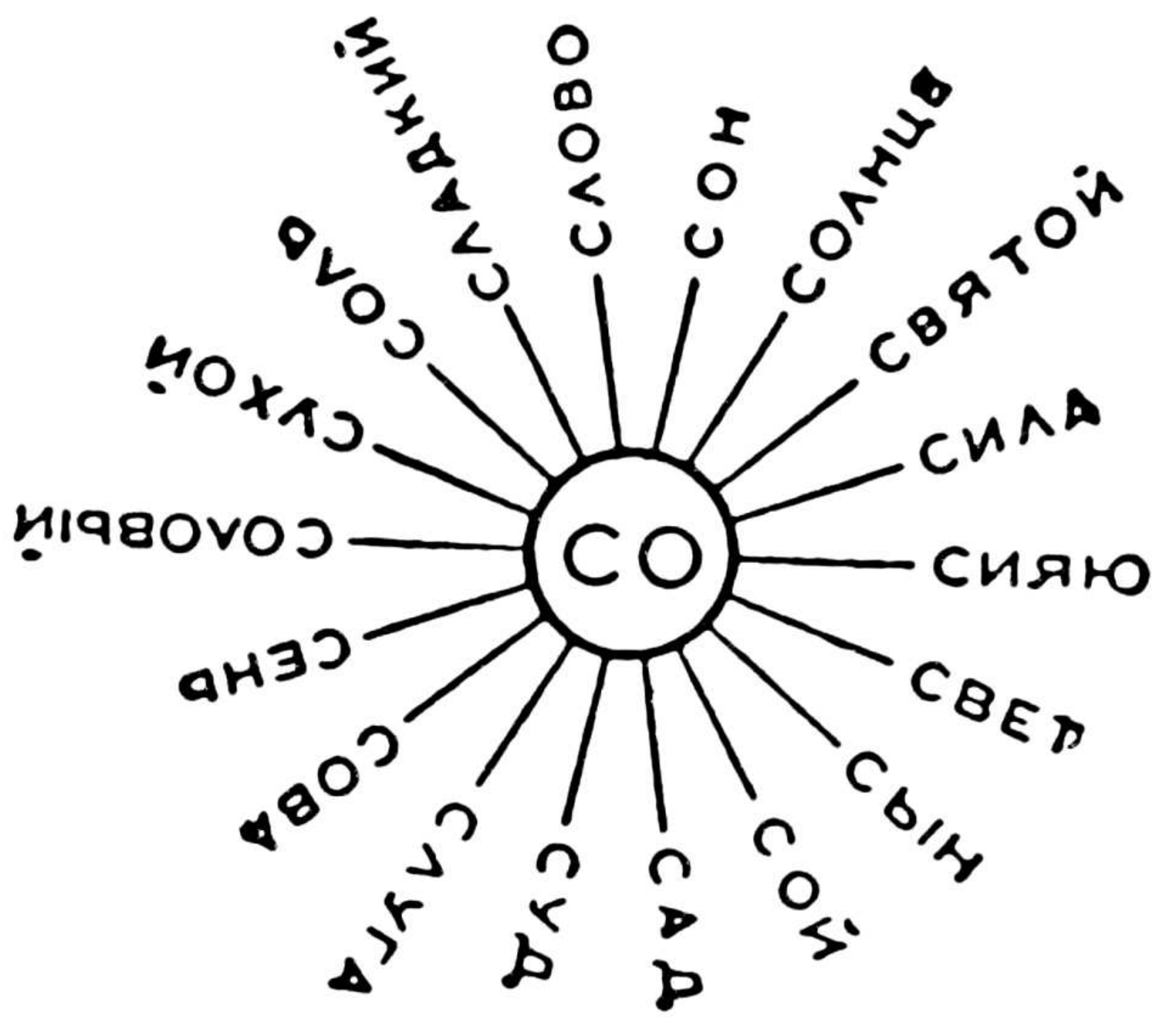
[*И*] *I*—is a link, addition, water: *pit, lit, nitka, vino.*

The word *nebo* [sky] = n + e + b + o = means: unknown + light + divinity + air = *nebo.*

Translated by Gerald Janecek

Velimir Khlebnikov

Khlebnikov (1885–1922) is one of the most captivating figures of literary modernism. After an initial devotion to the robust naturalism of Walt Whitman, in his association with Cubo-futurism he became a resolutely avant-garde poet, yet remained fond of Longfellow's Hiawatha. *He collaborated on the Futurist opera* Victory over the Sun *(1913) with Kruchenykh and the painter Malevich, a vanguard event on the order of* The Rite of Spring *or* Parade *in Paris. Like Hugo Ball (see "Sound Effects," p. 108 above), Khlebnikov was galvanized by the immensity of human loss in the First World War and spent his last years in feverish linguistic and numerological speculation. "The pen of war has dipped too often into the inkwell of humanity," he wrote, asking "Which is better—a universal language or universal slaughter?" In a far-ranging "Futurian" program he proposed to replace lethal weapons with anesthetizing guns, correlate monetary units to heartbeats, and unify humanity by means of "The Radio of the Future"—a prescient forecast of television. Claiming to have discovered "the pure Laws of Time" in 1920, Khlebnikov calculated that historical destiny resonated in intervals of 317 years, and he devised exacting numerological tabulations in a utopian attempt to forestall further historical catastrophe. "Number is a cup into which we may pour the liquid of any magnitude whatsoever." Khlebnikov's preoccupation with language was commensurate with his numerology. He produced poetical alphabets like that of Benjamin Blood ("Alphabetic Dimensions," p. 414 below), collaborated with Kruchenykh in theorizing* zaum, *and wrote a "supersaga" called* Zangezi *(1922) that activates a linguistic medley germane to the present anthology, including divine speech ("*Kezee, nezee, *dzeegaga!"), bird songs (the "Kree-tee-tee-tee-*tee-ee*—tsuey-tsuey-tsuey-*ssueyee*" of a yellow bunting and the blue jay's "*Pee*oo!* Pee*oo! pyak, pyak,* pyak!*"), an animated celestial alphabet, "sound-written songs" ("CHEÉCHECHÁCHA—the shine of sabers"), alphabetic reveries, phonetic permutations,* zaum *theory ("Speak to us in that beyonsense language of yours!"), and a demonstration of his historical numerology, "The Tables of Destiny." Elsewhere in his copious writings on language, the cosmological insistence of his concerns is rendered as literal radiance in the following diagram of "the way the syllable* so *[with] is a field that encompasses* son *[sleep],* solntse *[sun],* sila *[strength],* solod *[malt],* slovo *[word],* sladkii *[sweet],* soi *[clan: Macedonian dial.],* sad *[garden],* selo *[settlement],* sol' *[salt],* slyt' *[to be reputed],* syn *[son]":*



In the words of his translators, "Khlebnikov seems to have heard within himself not just one voice but hundreds, and was able to make out beneath their clamor the pure sounds of language forming themselves into patterns, resonating with the 'sounding string of humanity.' Khlebnikov was searching for the voice of Time itself, sounding in language."

The Warrior of the Kingdom

The warrior of the kingdom of the future hereby demands respect and a serious consideration of his beliefs.

1. He is armed like a hunter of wild beasts, with a net to trap ideas and a harpoon to defend them. He is naked and powerful. Who are we? We will continue raging like new-begotten wasps, until you resemble us like two peas in a pod. Then we will disappear.

We are the mouthpiece of fate. We have come from the bowels of the Russian sea. We are warriors, and in our persons we initiate a new estate in the social order.

2. We say that there exists a conceptual framework at the heart of self-sufficient speech, like a hand with five fingers, that is constructed upon five rays of sound, vocalic or consonantal, and can be perceived through the word like the bones of someone's hand. That is the principle of five rays, the elegant five-pointed structure of speech. So "Krylyshkuia zolotopis'mom tonchaishikh zhil" [Glitter-letter wing-winker] from *A Slap in the Face of Public Taste* comprises an even number of lines, the first of which are built upon five occurrences each of the letters *k, l, r,* and *u* (the structure of honeycombs). "My, ne umiraiushchie, smotrim na vas, umiraiushchikh" [We who do not die stand watching you, who do] is built upon five repetitions of the letter *m.* Enough examples of the five-pointed, starfish structure of our speech.

3. We demand that the floodgates of Pushkin and the waterlocks of Tolstoy be thrown open, to let loose the floods and waterfalls of the Montenegrin current in the proud *Russian language.* Example: They ask you, "Kogovich?" [whose son are you?]. You answer, "Ia soia nebes" [I am of the race of heaven].

Once they smash the glass chains on their claws, the eagles will fly ominously over the gulf between us and Montenegro, there to master the scream of new achievements (in the young Ignatov's phrase). Despite the howls of so many throats, we say that the sea is one, whether there or here.

4. I summon you to behold the face of one who stands upon a hill, and whose name is He Whose Time Has Come.

5. We are insulted at the distortion of Russian verbs by imported meanings. We are indignant and we protest loudly—the whole process is torture for us.

6. We teach that the word controls the brain, the brain controls the hands, and the hands control kingdoms. Self-sufficient speech is the bridge to a self-sufficient kingdom.

7. We counsel you to be fishers for pearls in the Russian sea, divers after pearls in grotesque dark shells.

8. We remind you in passing that besides the language of words there is the silent language of concepts formed by mental units (the tissue of concepts that controls the language of words). Thus the words Italia, Taurida, Volynia (all of which mean "the land of the bulls"), which have separate verbal existences, are one of the same thing—a rational existence that casts its shadows upon the surface of verbal expressions and political entities.

9. We remind you that in the land called "Germany" *G/H* and *SH* are the initial sounds in the names of close to two dozen of the greatest writers and thinkers that nation has produced (Schiller, Schlegel, Schopenhauer, Schelling, Goethe, Heine, Heise, Hegel), we remind you of the belligerent *B* in Russian art and of *KH,* which protects freedom and pride of independence in its life, we reveal and affirm the special nature of the initial sound of a word, a sound-noun independent of the word's meaning that appropriates to itself the title of conductor of destiny. In the initial consonant we see the bearer of destiny and the path of forces that give it a fateful significance. This force sign is sometimes common to different name-nouns: Anglia and Albion, Iberia, Ispania. Like the threads of destiny, the initial sound accompanies these states from the cradle to their decline. Consequently, a word has a three-fold nature: it is sound, concept, and a path for fate.

Ruling families often share a common fate sign (a sonic frontal bone) with the country they rule, the initial sound of their shared nature. Germany: Hapsburgs, Hohenzollerns. This is no mere trick of coincidence. It is apparent in language when we think of "fate" in its double meaning, as destiny and as that-which-is-spoken (*fatum*). Like a stroke of destiny, *G* unites Germany and Greece, *R* unites Russia and Rome. The thread of fate twists its way (by means of the initial sound) through the sound leaves and concept roots of words, and consequently it has a tubiform shape.

There is no need for you to greet what we have been saying with superstitious horror. Comparative linguists may have fits? Let them.

10. We maintain that an understanding of tribal life is revealed in numerals, and that it is thus possible to reconstruct the contours of primitive life. The number seven [*sem'*] shows that in ancestral Russia a family [*sem'ia*] was composed of seven [*sem'*] members; both words are linguistically related. The word eight [*vosem'*] indicates the entrance of a new member into [*vo*] the family. Equally distinctive in this respect are ten [*desiat'*] and a hundred [*sto*] and the word forty [*sorok*].

11. We state that:

M [*m*] contains within it the disintegration of a whole into parts (a large entity into smaller ones).

Л [*l*]—the uncontrolled movement of a great force of freedom (time past).

K [*k*]—the conversion of a force of movement into a force of enduring stasis (from rush to rest).

T [*t*]—the subordination of movement to a greater force, a goal.

С[*s*]—the assembly of parts into a whole (a return).

Н[*n*]—the conversion of something ponderable into nothing.

Б[*b*]—growth into something greater, the greatest point of the force of motion.

П[*p*]—lightweight bodies, the filling of an empty space by a supposedly empty body.

Р[*r*]—unruly movement, insubordinate to the whole.

В[*v*]—the penetration of a large body by a smaller one.

Ж[*zh*]—increase caused by excess of force (*obzhog* [burned], *zhech* [to burn up]).

З[*z*]

Г[*g*]—too little as a result of a situation of insufficient force, hunger.

i—unites
a—against
o—increases size
e—decline, decay
u—submissiveness

Thus a poem can be full of meaning from its vowels alone.

son [dream]—where nothingness penetrates a body.

nos [nose]—where a body penetrates nothingness.

kom [lump]—where a soft entity collects into a hard entity.

mok [wet]—where a hard entity becomes a soft entity (by means of water).

koty [fur slippers]—the movement of feet in shoe housings. Foot covering softens the impact of the feet, so *kot* [cat, the tame animal] means soft-footed.

toki [currents, also threshing-floor] movement [illegible] (water, threshing).

nora [burrow]—a winding hollow.

rot [mouth].

Notes from a notebook: The words *neliubimyi* [unloved] and *neliudimyi* [unsociable] reveal the relationship between love [*liubov'*] and people [*liudi*]. The connections between *sviatost'* [holiness] and *svet* [light] and between *grekh* [sin] and *goret'* [to burn], show that our ancestors distinguished *dusha* [in the sense of stifling heat] and *dusha* [in the sense of soul, spirit, something dear]. The word *teplyi* [hot] can have a pejorative meaning, *svetik* [dear, light of my life] an affectionate one.

М [*m*] is the division of a certain volume into an indefinitely large number of parts, equal to it as a whole. *M* is the relation of the whole extent of a line to its members. *Muka* [flour], *molot* [hammer], *mlin* [mill: dial.], *mel* [chalk], *miakii* [soft], *mysh'* [mouse], *mochka* [earlobe].

Л [*l*] is the conversion of motion from motion along a line to motion over an area transverse to it that intersects the path of the motion. $L = \sqrt{-1}$. *Lob* [forehead], *laty* [armor], *lyzhi* [skis], *lodka* [boat], *let* [flight], *luzha* [pond] (the motion of weight), *lava* [cavalry charge], i.e., a laterally extended formation.

С [*s*] is the movement of several points transmitted from a motionless point, at a narrow angle and in one direction. *Solntse* [sun], *siiat'* [to shine] (rays), *synov'ia* [sons], *soi* [clan] (descendants of a motionless ancestor), *sem'ia* [family], *semia* [seed, semen], *sol* (the ray of a ruler).

К [*k*] is the conversion of forces of motion into forces of cohesion. *Kamen'* [stone], *zakovannii* [chained], *kliuch* [key], *pokoi* [rest], *koika* [bunk], *kniaz'* [prince], *kol* [stake], *kol'tsa* [rings].

Ш [*sh*] is the convergence and reduction in the number of several surfaces while preserving their areas. The union of those surface into one. Also the greatest volume within the smallest and smoothest surface. *Shit'* [to sew], *shir'* [expanse], *shut* [jester, buffoon], *shar* [sphere], *shumnyi* [noisy], i.e., hornless. *Shorokh* [powder], *shum* [noise], *shamkat'* [to mumble].

Щ [*shch*] is the largest possible surface for any given volume. A profusion of angles. *Shchert'* [?], *shchel'* [crack, fissure], *shchedrovityi* [pocked], *shcherba* [dent], *shchovba* [?], *shchurit'* [to narrow one's eyes].

З [*z*] is the resonant vibration of distant strings. Separate vibrations with one single origin and with an identical number of vibrations. Reflection. *Zerkalo* [mirror], *zoi* [echo], (echo) *zyb'* [ripple] (the reflection of a storm), *zmei* [serpent], which moves by vibrating. *Zvat'* [to call], *zvezdy* [stars], *zor'ka* [dawnlight], *zaria* [dawn], *zarnitsa* [heat lightning] (lightning's reflection), *zen'* [earth: dial.], *zrak* [the look of something], *ozero* [lake], *zud* [itch], a pain without any origin, reflected pain.

Ч [*ch*] is a casing. A surface enclosing an empty interior, filled up with or containing a volume of something. *Cherep* [skull], *chash* [*cup*], *chara* [goblet], *chulok* [stocking], *chren* [boiling pan], *choboty* [boots], *chereviki* [high-heeled boots], *cherepakha* [turtle], *chekol* [case], *chakhotka* [consumption].

В [*v*] is a wavelike movement, a turning: *veter* [wind], *vikhr'* [whirlwind], *vit'* [to twist], *val* [groundswell], *volos* [hair], *volny* [waves], *vorota* [gates], *vremia* [time], *voz* [wagon], *vrat* [gate], *volchok* [judas-window], *vys'* [heights] (something thrown into the heights comes back), *vervie* [cord], *vir* [whirlpool], *vorota vertiatsia* [a gate turns], so does *volchok* [a top]. *Zavyvanie* [howling] involves the revolution of sound. *Vrag* [an enemy] bends a direct line of movement into the ray of a circle. *Ves* [weight, gravity] is the reason the planets revolve around the sun.

П [*p*] is movement born of a difference in pressures: *porokh* [powder], *pushka* [cannon], *pit'* [to drink], *pustoi* [empty]. The conversion of a substance by force of pressure from a state of saturation to one of unsaturation, emptiness, from a compressed state to a scattered one. *Pena* [foam], *puzyr'* [bubble], *prakh* [ashes], *pyl'* [dust]. *P* is the opposite of *k. Kuznets skovyvaet* [A blacksmith forges], while *pech'* [stove], *pushka* [cannon], *porokh* [powder], *pyl'* [dust], *pena* [foam], *puzyr* [bubble], *pul' ia* [bullet]—all these dissipate a previously concentrated substance. *P* implies the free movement in one dimension of a substance away from a strong pressure toward a weak one. For example: *Pech'* [stove], *pishchal'* [arquebus], *pushka* [cannon], *pruzhina* [spring], *pravo* [right], *put'* [path], *pad* [school of fish: dial], *puzo* [belly], *past'* [maw]: an opening for *pit' ia* [drink] and *pishche* [food], *pasti* [to graze], *pravit'* [to rule], meaning to accommodate differences in pressures from individual wills, *palit'* [to blaze]. In a stove [*pech'*] wood is converted into smoke. *Perun* [god of thunder] embodies a maximum of will and pressure.

Ж [*zh*] is the freedom to move independently of one's neighbors. From which we get *zhidkii* [liquid, watery], and *zhivoi* [alive, lively], and everything near the water—*zhabry* [gills], *zhaba* [a toad], *zhazhda* [thirst], *zhalga* [a water-weed]. In *zh* we have the separation of the dry principle, full of movement, from water, the struggle between fire and water. In the opinion of the ancients there was an equals sign drawn between water and time (past). Whence the kinship between *zhazhdat* [thirst] and *zhdat'* [wait]. *Zh* is frequently the separation of water from the fiery element.

X [*kh*] is whatever needs covering (help, protection) in order to grow. *Khily* [puny], *okhraniat'* [to protect], *kholia* [care], *khibarka* [hovel], *khata* [hut], *khram* [temple], *khlev* [cowshed], *pokhishchat'* [to abduct], *khleb* [grain], *khireiushchii* [decaying]. Also *okhraniteli* [guardians], who are *khorobrye* [boastful], *khutor* [farmstead], can also be *khizhina* [shack]; those who destroy fences are *okhal' nichaiushchie* [mischiefmakers], *khaiat'* [to run something down, talk it down]. *Khula* [abrasive criticism], i.e., an intrusion on something already protected; *kholod* [cold]. *Khovat' sia* means to conceal oneself. *Khokhol* [crest of hair] and *kholka* [forelock] both serve to protect the eyes. *Volodat'* [to govern] and *volost'* [an administrative district]—compare *kholodat'* [to turn cold]—refer to common points of warmth and life. *Kh* is whatever cannot exist without shelter, whatever is not able to exist on its own, also *khitryi* [crafty, two-faced, hidden]. Whatever is consigned to different places, i.e., *khleb* [grain] (which is produced through human artifice), *khoronit'* [to bury, inter], *khvost* [tail].

T [*t*] is something that contradicts nature, often a stoppage of motion—*tyn* [palisade], *tol' ko ten'* [only a shadow], *taiat'* [to melt], *tucha* [thundercloud]. *Tochka* [a point]. *Teplota* [heat] results from arrested motion.

Д [*d*] is the transposition of an element from one field of force to another. *Dar* [a gift], *dan'* [tribute], *doch'* [daughter] (one who leaves her own tribe), *delit'* [divide], *drob'* [buckshot], *dolia* [allotment].

T [*t*] is whatever is covered, out of sight and the light of day: *temia* [crown] (of the head), *tyl* [back] (of the head), *tem'* [darkness], *ten'* [shadow], *tucha* [thundercloud], *tiiat'* [to turn dark]. *Tor* [paved road] obliterates nature, a covering material motion, *tyn* [palisade], *tochka* [point]; whatever is *tiazhelyi* [heavy] inhibits motion; *tukhnut'* [to rot] means that the ray of life is extinguished. A raylike approach to life is characteristic of language. Shining has to do with a common fiery point and a multiplicity of rays proceeding from it (the sun). *Soi* [clan] has to do with a common tribal point—one particular ancestor and many descendants.

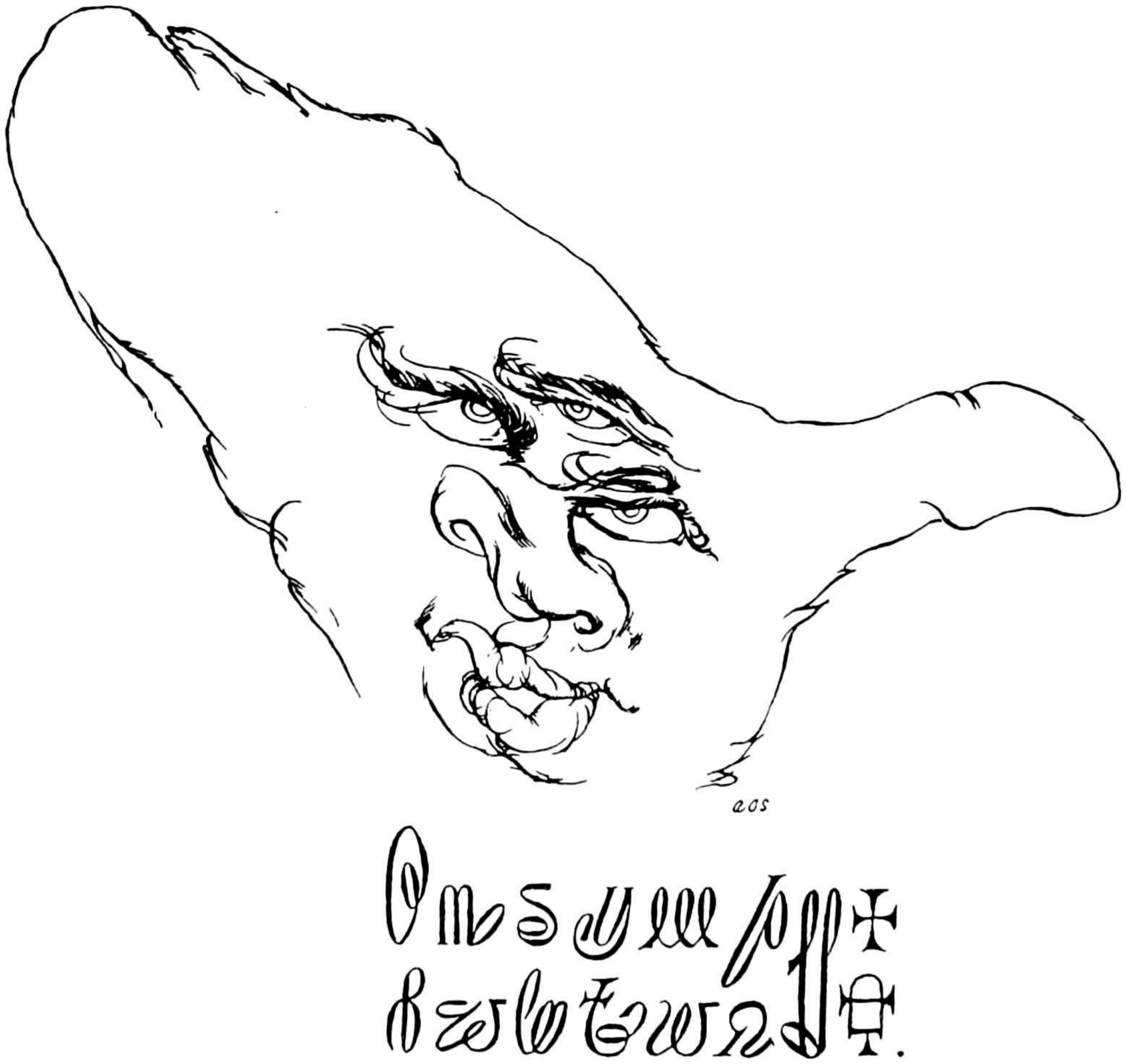
If *s* is motion out from a fixed point (the path extends outward while the angle remains constant), then *v* is motion around a fixed point (the path is constant in length, the angle changes and increases): *volosy* [hair], *vetki* [branches], *veiat'* [to flutter]. In *voska* [wax] and *vaianie* [sculpture], *vlaga* [moisture] and *voda* [water], the angle of the particles changes, but their common length and their location remain fixed. *Vrashchat'sia* [to turn], *vertel* [spit], *vint* [screw], *vereteno* [spindle], *venok* [wreath], *vikhr'* [whirlwind], *vereia* [gatepost], *val* [billow, swell], all underline the fact that it is precisely these two conditions—constant length and a changing angle—that produce circular motion.

Translated by Paul Schmidt

Austin Osman Spare

Austin Osman Spare (1886–1956), an English magus of the Zos-Kia cult, elaborated his sigils by condensing letters of the alphabet into diagrammatic glyphs of desire, which were to be integrated into postural (yogalike) practices—"monograms of thought, for the government of energy." Spare's work is contemporaneous with Hugo Ball's attempts "to rediscover the evangelical concept of the 'word' (logos) as a magical complex image"—as well as with Walter Benjamin's thesis that "Mediation, which is the immediacy of all mental communication, is the fundamental problem of linguistic theory, and if one chooses to call this immediacy magic, then the primary problem of language is its magic." Spare's "sentient symbols" and his "alphabet of desire" situate this mediatory magic in a libidinal framework of Tantric—which is to say cosmological—proportions.

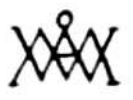
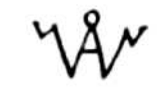
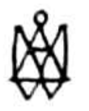
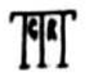
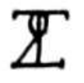
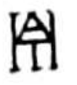
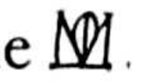
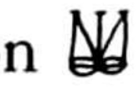
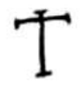
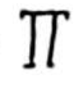
Sigils: Belief with Protection



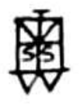
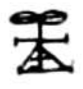
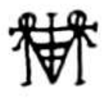
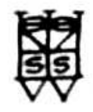
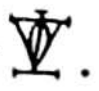
THE THUMB POSTURE OF THE HAND.

Magical Obsession

I will now explain their creation and use; there is no difficulty about it, how pure and clear it all is.[1] Out of love for my foolish devotees I invented it. All desire, whether for Pleasure, Knowledge, or Power, that cannot find "Natural" expression, can by Sigils and their formula find fulfilment from the sub-consciousness. Sigils are the means of guiding and uniting the partially free belief[2] with an organic desire, its carriage and retention till its purpose served in the sub-conscious self, and its means of reincarnation in the Ego. All thought can be expressed by form in true relation. Sigils are monograms of thought, for the government of energy (all heraldry, crests, monograms, are Sigils and the Karmas they govern), relating to Karmas; a mathematical means of symbolizing desire and giving it form that has the virtue of preventing any thought and association on that particular desire (at the magical time), escaping the detection of the Ego, so that it does not restrain or attach such desire to its own transitory images, memories and worries, but allows it free passage to the sub-consciousness.

Sigils are made by combining the letters of the alphabet simplified. Illustration[3] the word "Woman" in Sigil form is  or  or  etc. The word tiger  or  Hat  Come . Moon  It  or  etc., etc. The idea being to obtain a simple form which can be easily visualised at will, and has not too much pictorial relation to the desire. The true method has a much greater virtue, which cannot be explained briefly, being the secret of thought form, as degrees of suggestion, and what exactly is in a name. We have now agreed as to how a Sigil is made, and what virtue it has. Verily, what a person believes by Sigils, is the truth, and is always fulfilled. This system of Sigils is believed by taking it up as a hobby at a time of great disappointment or sorrow. By Sigils I have endowed fools with wisdom, made the wise fools, giving health to the sick and weak, disease to the strong, etc. Now, if for some purpose, you wanted the strength of a tiger—you would make a sentence such as:—

"This my wish to obtain the strength of a tiger." Sigilized this would be:—

This my wish 
To obtain 
The strength of a Tiger 
Combined as one Sigil  or .

Now by virtue of this Sigil you are able to send your desire into the sub-consciousness (which contains all strength); that having happened, it is the desire's realization by the manifestation of the knowledge or power necessary.

First, all consciousness except of the Sigil has to be annulled; do not confuse this with concentration—you simply conceive the Sigil any moment you begin to think. Vacuity[4] is obtained by exhausting the mind and body by some means or another. A personal or traditional means serves equally well, depending on temperament; choose the most pleasant; these should be held in favour, Mantras and Posture, Women and Wine, Tennis, and the playing of Patience, or by walking and concentration on the Sigil, etc., etc. None is necessary to him who has (even symbolically) for a moment by the "Neither-Neither" conquered the dual principle (Conception), his Ego is free from gravity. If the Sigil is made an obsession by continual apprehension, its realization may happen any moment, in the form of inspiration. This is done by reverting the mind to the Sigil when one is extremely worried—the time of exhaustion is the time of fulfilment. At the time of exhaustion or vacuity, retain only and visualize the Sigil form—eventually it becomes vague, then vanishes and success is assured. By the Ego conceiving only the Sigil, and not being able to conceive anything from it, all energy is focussed through it, the desire for identification carries it to the corresponding sub-conscious stratum, its destination. The Sigil being a vehicle, serves the purpose of protecting consciousness from the direct manifestation of the (consciously unacknowledged) obsession, conflict is avoided with any incompatible ideas and neither gains separate personality. It (the obsession) is either gradually assimilated and becomes organic or returns to its original abode, its purpose of illumination served. Hence the mind, by Sigils, depending upon the intensity of desire, is illuminated or obsessed (knowledge or power) from that particular Karma (the sub-conscious stratum, a particular existence and knowledge gained by it) relative to the desire, but not from a memory or experience which was recent. Knowledge is obtained by the sensation, resulting from the unity of the desire and Karma. Power, by its "actual" vitalization and resurrection.

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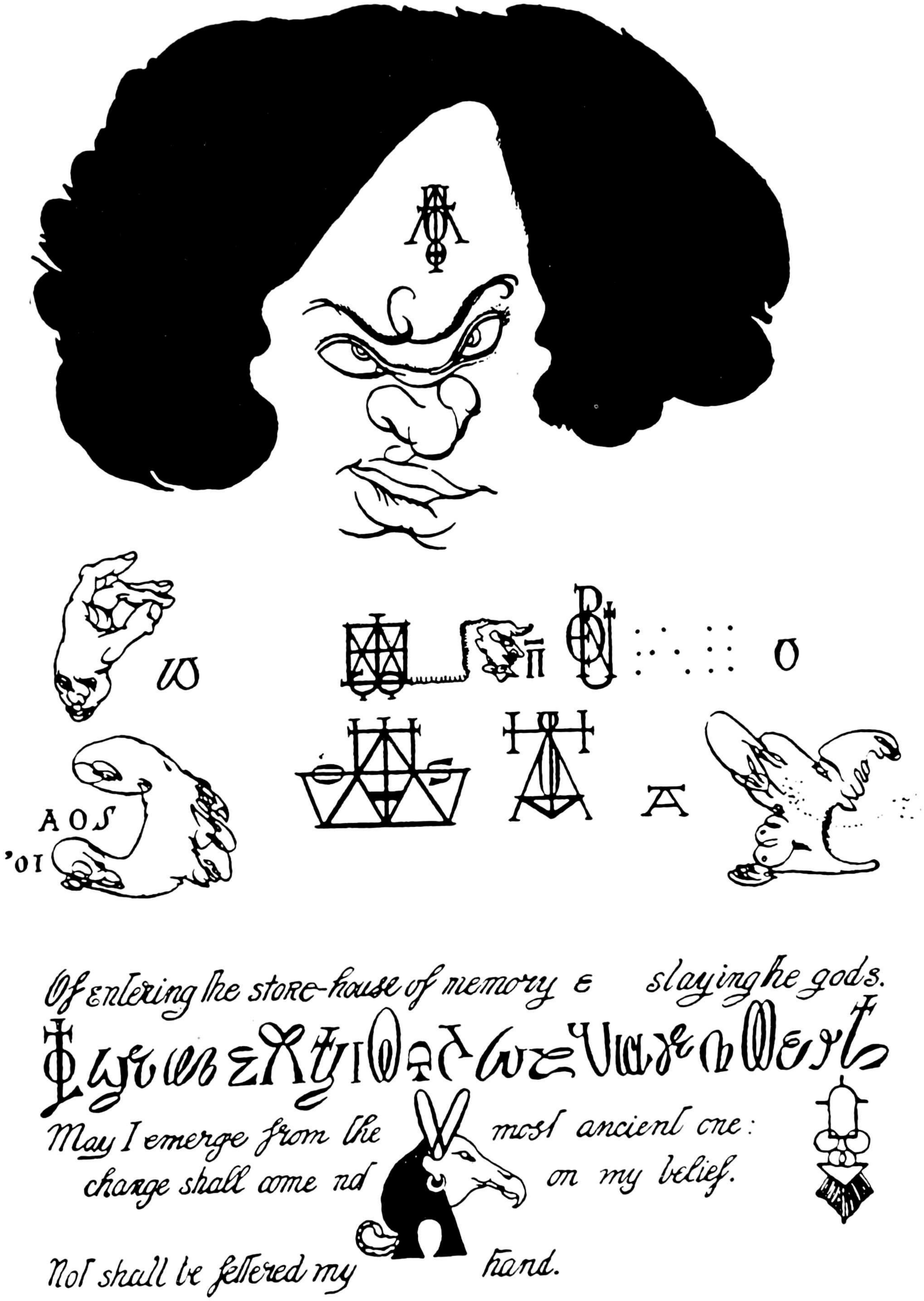
[1] By this system, you know exactly what (you believe) your Sigil must relate to. If you used any form stupidly, you might possibly "conjure up" exactly what you did not want—the mother of insanity, or what always happens then, nothing at all. This being the only system, any result other than by it is accidental. Also you do not have to dress up as a traditional magician, wizard or priest, build expensive temples, obtain virgin parchment, black goat's blood, etc., etc., in fact no theatricals or humbug.

[2] Free belief or energy, i.e., a disappointed desire, not yet an obsession.

[3] There are six methods of Sigils employed in this book, each corresponding to different strata. The one shown here is illustrative and the fundamental idea of them all, from which anyone can evolve his own system. Conditions, etc., of necessity subsequently evolve themselves. Also a person has more power of creation and originality with a limited means of expression.

[4] This is not the passivity of mediumism which opens the mind to what is called external influences or disembodied energy, usually having no better purpose than rap-tables. There are many means of attaining this state of vacuity: I mention the most simple, there is no need for crucifixion. Drugs are useless. Smoking and laziness the most difficult.

This knowledge leaves its stratum in company with the energy or desire returning to the Ego. It escapes the Ego's resistance by associating with similar images, memories, or experiences relative (received in this life), that the mind contains, and crystalizes itself by their symbolism. Hence most illumination is symbolic, and must be subsequently translated.



Of entering the store-house of memory & slaying the gods.

May I emerge from the most ancient one: change shall come nd on my belief.

Not shall be fettered my hand.

THE THUMB CONCENTRATION.

Sigils: Belief with Protection

Marcel Griaule and Ogotemmêli

Trained as a linguist, friend of Michel Leiris and Georges Bataille, Griaule (1898–1956) held the first chair of general ethnology at the Sorbonne and contributed important articles to the Critical Dictionary *and the influential vanguard journal* Documents. *Leiris and Griaule encountered the Dogon people of Mali in West Africa on an ethnographic expedition in 1931, and Griaule spent the rest of his life studying their culture. The blind sage Ogotemmêli is Griaule's informant in the following extracts. Dogon cosmology is profoundly logocentric: there is little in human behavior, artifact, or even in the body that it does not register speech. "A work or a material creation such as a wrought hoe or a woven cloth are so many 'words.' As Maurice Leenhardt observes: 'An object is speech because in being made it must reveal a person.'" Speech is of liquid essence which is internally cooked by the organs; thought is conceived as "speech which is in the liver," and right speech consists of water steamed by the heart. Water is only one of the elements of speech, the others being air (as sound vehicle), earth (which lends weight to words), fire (registering the emotional intensity of the speaker), and oil (the charm of the blood, associated with syntactic junctures and with women).*

Weaving and the Word

The Nummo, looking down from Heaven, saw their mother, the earth, naked and speechless, as a consequence no doubt of the original incident in her relations with the God Amma. It was necessary to put an end to this state of disorder. The Nummo accordingly came down to earth, bringing with them fibres pulled from plants already created in the heavenly regions. They took ten bunches of these fibres, corresponding to the number of their ten fingers, and made two strands of them, one for the front and one for behind. To this day masked men still wear these appendages hanging down to their feet in thick tendrils.

But the purpose of this garment was not merely modesty. It manifested on earth the first act in the ordering of the universe and the revelation of the helicoid sign in the form of an undulating broken line.

For the fibres fell in coils, symbol of tornadoes, of the windings of torrents, of eddies and whirlwinds, of the undulating movement of reptiles. They recall also the eight-fold spirals of the sun, which sucks up moisture. They were themselves a channel of moisture, impregnated as they were with the freshness of the celestial plants. They were full of the essence of Nummo: they *were* Nummo in motion, as shown in the undulating line, which can be prolonged to infinity.

When Nummo speaks, what comes from his mouth is a warm vapour which conveys, and itself constitutes, speech. This vapour, like all water, has sound, dies away in a helicoid line. The coiled fringes of the skirt were therefore the chosen vehicle for the words which the Spirit desired to reveal to the earth. He endued his hands with magic power by raising them to his lips while he plaited the skirt, so that the moisture of his words was imparted to the damp plaits, and the spiritual revelation was embodied in the technical instruction.

In these fibres full of water and words, placed over his mother's genitalia, Nummo is thus always present.

Thus clothed, the earth had a language, the first language of this world and the most primitive of all time. Its syntax was elementary, its verbs few, and its vocabulary without elegance. The words were breathed sounds scarcely differentiated from one another, but nevertheless vehicles. Such as it was, this ill-defined speech sufficed for the great works of the beginning of all things.

. . .

In those obscure beginnings of the evolution of the world, men had no knowledge of death, and the eight ancestors, offspring of the first human couple, lived on indefinitely. They had eight separate lines of descendants, each of them being self-propagating since each was both male and female.

The four males and the four females were couples in consequence of their lower, i.e. of their sexual, parts. The four males were man and woman, and the four females were woman and man. In the case of the males it was the man, and in the case of the females it was the woman, who played the dominant role. They coupled and became pregnant each in him or herself, and so produced their offspring.

But in the fullness of time an obscure instinct led the eldest of them towards the anthill which had been occupied by the Nummo. He wore on his head as head-dress and to protect him from the sun, the wooden bowl he used for his food. He put his two feet into the opening of the anthill, that is of the earth's womb, and sank in slowly as if for a parturition *a tergo.*

The whole of him thus entered into the earth, and his head itself disappeared. But he left on the ground, as evidence of his passage into that world, the bowl which had caught on the edges of the opening. All that remained on the anthill was the round wooden bowl, still bearing traces of the food and the finger-prints of its vanished owner, symbol of his body and of his human nature, as, in the animal world, is the skin which a reptile has shed.

Liberated from his earthly condition, the ancestor was taken in charge by the regenerating Pair. The male Nummo led him into the depths of the earth, where, in the waters of the womb of his partner he curled himself up like a foetus and shrank to germinal form, and acquired the quality of water, the seed of God and the essence of the two Spirits.

And all this process was the work of the Word. The male with his voice accompanied the female Nummo who was speaking to herself and to her own sex. The spoken Word entered into her and wound itself round her womb in a spiral of eight turns. Just as the helical band of copper round the sun gives to it its daily movement, so the spiral of the Word gave to the womb its regenerative movement.

Thus perfected by water and words, the new Spirit was expelled and went up to Heaven.

All the eight ancestors in succession had to undergo this process of transformation; but, when the turn of the seventh ancestor came, the change was the occasion of a notable occurrence.

The seventh in a series, it must be remembered, represents perfection. Though equal in quality with the others, he is the sum of the feminine element, which is four, and the masculine element, which is three. He is thus the completion of the perfect series, symbol of the total union of male and female, that is to say of unity.

And to this homogeneous whole belongs especially the mastery of words, that is, of language; and the appearance on earth of such a one was bound to be the prelude to revolutionary developments of a beneficent character.

In the earth's womb he became, like the others, water and spirit, and his development, like theirs, followed the rhythm of the words uttered by the two transforming Nummo.

'The words which the female Nummo spoke to herself,' Ogotemmêli explained, 'turned into a spiral and entered into her sexual part. The male Nummo helped her. These are the words which the seventh ancestor learnt inside the womb.'

The others equally possessed the knowledge of these words in virtue of their experiences in the same place; but they had not attained the mastery of them nor was it given to them to develop their use. What the seventh ancestor had received, therefore, was the perfect knowledge of a Word—the second Word to be heard on earth, clearer than the first and not, like the first, reserved for particular recipients, but destined for all mankind. Thus he was able to achieve progress for the world. In particular, he enabled mankind to take precedence over God's wicked son, the jackal. The latter, it is true, still possessed knowledge of the first Word, and could still therefore reveal to diviners certain heavenly purposes; but in the future order of things he was to be merely a laggard in the process of revelation.

The potent second Word developed the powers of its new possessor. Gradually he came to regard his regeneration in the womb of the earth as equivalent to the capture and occupation of that womb, and little by little he took possession of the whole organism, making such use of it as suited him for the purpose of his activities. His lips began to merge with the edges of the anthill, which widened and became a mouth.

. . .

At sunrise on the appointed day the seventh ancestor Spirit spat out eighty threads of cotton; these he distributed between his upper teeth which acted as the teeth of a weaver's reed. In this way he made the uneven threads of a warp. He did the same with the lower teeth to make the even threads. By opening and shutting his jaws the Spirit caused the threads of the warp to make the movements required in weaving. His whole face took part in the work, his nose studs serving as the block, while the stud in his lower lip was the shuttle.

As the threads crossed and uncrossed, the two tips of the Spirit's forked tongue pushed the thread of the weft to and fro, and the web took shape from his mouth in the breath of the second revealed Word.

For the Spirit was speaking while the work proceeded. As did the Nummo in the first revelation, he imparted his Word by means of a technical process, so that all men could understand. By so doing he showed the identity of material actions and spiritual forces, or rather the need for their co-operation.

The words that the Spirit uttered filled all the interstices of the stuff: they were woven in the threads, and formed part and parcel of the cloth. They were the cloth, and the cloth was the Word. That is why woven material is called *soy*, which means 'It is the spoken word'. *Soy* also means 'seven', for the Spirit who spoke as he wove was seventh in the series of ancestors.

While the work was going on, the ant came and went on the edge of the opening in the breath of the Spirit, hearing and remembering his words. The new instruction, which she thus received, she passed on to the men who lived in those regions, and who had already followed the transformation of the sex of the earth.

Up to the time of the ancestors' descent into the anthill, men had lived in holes dug in the level soil like the lairs of animals. When their attention was drawn to the bowls which the ancestors had left behind them, they began to notice the shape of the anthill, which they thought much better than their holes. They copied the shape of the anthill accordingly, making passages and rooms as shelters from the rain, and began to store the produce of the crops for food.

They were thus advancing towards a less primitive way of life; and, when they noticed the growth of teeth round the opening, they imitated these too as a means of protection against wild beasts. They moulded great teeth of clay, dried them and set them up round the entrances to their dwellings.

At the moment of the second instruction, therefore, men were living in dens which were already, in some sort, a prefiguration of the place of revelation and of the womb into which each of them in due course would descend to be regenerated. And, moreover, the human anthill, with its occupants and its store-chambers for grain, was a rudimentary image of the system which, much later, was to come down to them from Heaven in the form of a marvellous granary.

These dim outlines of things to come predisposed men to take advice from the ant. The latter, after what it had seen the Spirit do, had laid in a store of cotton-fibres. These it had made into threads and, in the sight of men, drew them between the teeth of the anthill entrance as the Spirit had done. As the warp emerged, the men passed the thread of the weft, throwing it right and left in time to the opening and shutting movements of the jaws, and the resulting web was rolled round a piece of wood, fore-runner of the beam.

The ant at the same time revealed the words it had heard and the man repeated them. Thus there was re-created by human lips the concept of life in motion, of the transposition of forces, of the efficacy of the breath of the Spirit, which the seventh ancestor had created; and thus the interlacing of warp and weft enclosed the same words, the new instruction which became the heritage of mankind and was handed on from generation to generation of weavers to the accompaniment of the clapping of the shuttle and the creaking of the block, which they call the 'creaking of the Word'.

All these operations took place by daylight, for spinning and weaving are work for the daytime. Working at night would mean weaving webs of silence and darkness.

. . .

It remained only to speak of the Word, on which (he said) the whole revelation of the art of weaving was based.

'The Word,' said the old man, 'is in the sound of the block and the shuttle. The name of the block means "creaking of the word". Everybody understands what is meant by "the word" in that connection. It is interwoven with the threads: it fills the interstices in the fabric. It belongs to the eight ancestors; the first seven possess it: the seventh is the master of it; it is itself the eighth.'

He repeated: 'The words of the seven ancestors fill the gaps and form the eight. The Word, being water, follows the zigzag line of the woof.'

The weaver, he explained, sings as he throws the shuttle, and the sound of his voice enters into the warp, adding to and taking along with it the voice of the ancestors. For the weaver is Lébé, the man of the eighth family and consequently the Word itself.

. . .

Weaving, like smithing, is daytime labour, for warp and woof symbolize a being of light and language, while the spinner's spindle turns on a skin sun, and her calabash of white ash is a fertilized sun. It is only fitting, therefore, that the sun should shine on the craft. Weaving by night would produce a web of silence and shadow. A weaver who worked after sunset, when God shuts the door of the world, would become blind.

. . .

The ear is bi-sexual in both man and woman. The external ear protects the auditory channel, which represents the female sex organ. The red triangular pendants are the testicles. The eight copper studs in the form of a large crescent worn on the edge of the helix are the eight ancestors.

The part played by the ear in the act of generation was to form the subject of another conversation.

The scarifications practised by women reproduce those of the Nummo. They consist usually of two lines of incisions—one vertical stretching from the level of the breasts to the navel, while the other is horizontal, lying across the belly from one side to the other. The lines are in two rows of short slanting incisions forming a series of Vs without points.

Four parallel incisions (feminine number) are made on the temples.

Each of these incisions is a representation of the organ of sex, cut with a razor symbolizing the male organ. They are always moist because they are open at the name of the Spirit of Water. It is thus that the women's fertility is multiplied.

'What of the hair? Has that a meaning?'

'Women's hair,' replied Ogotemmêli, 'is the Nummo's hair. The comb which makes the parting is like the carding-comb which separates the threads of the warp. When the hair is dressed in the *Kou tari* style there ought really to be sixty partings in the middle and ten each side, making eighty in all, to recall the eight families; but this is not possible. Moreover, the rules about dress are not strict, and very few women wear all these ornaments.'

On the social aspects of clothing Ogotemmêli had much to say.

'The loin-cloth is tight,' he said, 'to conceal the woman's sex, but it stimulates a desire to see what is underneath. This is because of the Word, which the Nummo put into the fabric. That word is every woman's secret, and is what attracts the man. A woman must have secret parts to inspire desire. If she went about in the market with nothing on, no one would run after her even if she were very beautiful. Undressed and unadorned she is not desirable; but dress and ornament make men desire her, even if she is not beautiful. From a very beautiful woman without adornment men turn away.'

He reflected a few moments before adding:

'To be naked is to be speechless.'

. . .

The conversation of the previous day had made plain the power of the human word. The voice of man can arouse God and extend divine action.

This, no doubt, was only to be expected, since God himself, acting through his son the Nummo, had three times reorganized the world by means of three successive Words, each more explicit and more widespread in its range than the one before it. There had been also the regeneration of the eight men and their rebirth as Water Spirits through the voice of the Nummo who, by speaking to himself, fertilized himself.

. . .

'The Nummo,' he said, 'who is water and heat, enters the body in the water one drinks, and communicates his heat to the bile and the liver. The life-force, which is the bearer of the Word, which *is* the Word, leaves the mouth in the form of breath, or water vapour, which is water and is Word.'

He repeated what he had said the day before, that the Word came from the deepest and most secret part of the being, namely, the liver. But he preferred to follow the original line of his thought, and not to answer questions.

He reminded them that the first Word had been pronounced in front of the genitalia of a woman; the first skirt had been plaited, that is, 'spoken', by the Nummo in front of his mother.

The Word finally came from the anthill, that is, from the mouth of the seventh Nummo, which is to say from a woman's genitalia.

The second Word, contained in the craft of weaving, emerged from a mouth, which was also the primordial sex organ, in which the first childbirths took place.

'Issuing from a woman's sexual part,' said Ogotemmêli, 'the Word enters another sexual part, namely the ear.'

In the symbolism of the body already discussed by the old man, the ear was bi-sexual: the external ear was male, and the auditory aperture female. But in fact the Word, according to its nature, can enter by two apertures in a woman—the ear or the sexual organ.

Bad words enter by the ear and pass into the throat, the liver, and finally the womb. The unpleasant smell of the female sexual parts comes from the bad words heard by the ear. The smell, apparently, completing a cycle of words.

On the other hand good words, though taken in by the ear, go directly to the sexual parts where they encircle the womb as the copper spiral encircles the sun. This Word of water provides and maintains the moisture necessary for procreation, and the Nummo, by this means, introduces a germ of water into the womb. He changes the water of the Word into a germ, and gives it the appearance of a human being but the essence of a Nummo. Or rather, the Nummo, present in the moist sexual organ, as in all water, by means of efficacious words which mingle with the woman's seed, moulds a tiny watery creature in his own image.

Thus at the very beginning of human life is to be found a divine germ which lies waiting in the womb of every fertile woman. It is shaped by the Nummo: but the living matter of which it is composed is produced by human action. All good words, whether spoken by the mouths of men or women, enter the bodies of all women, and prepare them for future mating and childbirth.

This is because the germ thus formed of water cannot grow or develop; it is in a state of expectation. It can however be destroyed by evil influences. It is motionless, and the flow of good words, even if it were unceasing, would do no more than preserve it in this condition. It awaits the dawn of its being.

. . .

At the moment of union the Nummo guides the male seed, which encircles the womb with a spiral motion, as the Word did. This seed, coming as it does from an organ made of earth, is itself a symbol of the earth. It is also earth, because it comes from the man's joints, which were indicated in the original tomb by the covenant-stones cast up there.

'The stones,' said the old man, 'were put at the points where the joints lie, because the joints are the chief thing in the body of a man.'

The Nummo moulded this earth with the water of the germ, which is itself the produce of the words taught by Heaven.

'The water of the woman,' said Ogotemmêli, 'which the Nummo formed in his own image, is mingled by him with the seed of the man, who is earth.'

As usual he went on to enlarge on a difficult point by retouching his first statement.

'Just as God shaped man out of earth and water, so the Nummo shapes the seed of the man with the water of the woman.'

'The Nummo,' he added finally, 'with the words and the woman's seed forms a being of water after his own image. The man's seed enters into this germ as a man.'

He meant that the human nature in its totality, 'as a man,' entered the being of celestial essence that was awaiting life in the womb.

The man's seed, originating in the joints, transmitted them, providing the being, whose limbs were supple like those of the Nummo, with a man's elbows and knees. Thus the male seed, extracted from the eight joints, directs itself within the embryo to places corresponding to those it occupies in the limbs of the man, in this way giving the first indication of the human frame.

It is also, by its earthly quality, both reminder and evidence of the debt which each of us owes to the earth, because it was of earth that the first pair were made; and this debt has to be paid by the shedding of blood, in circumcision and excision and in menstruation.

But Ogotemmêli postponed discussion of this debt till later and reverted to the effects of the Word in generation.

'Words spoken by day enter the bodies of women. Any man speaking to any woman is assisting procreation. By speaking to a woman one fertilizes her, or at least by introducing into her a celestial germ, one makes it possible for her to be impregnated in the normal way.'

He compared a pregnant woman to an ear of millet beginning to swell within its leafy spiral. Such an ear is said to have 'found its voice', perhaps by analogy with a fertilized woman, who also has found a voice, that is, the voice of a man.

But he insisted that the word, if it was to be good, must be spoken in the daytime. 'Words of the day are the only good words; a word spoken by night is ill-omened.' And that was why it was forbidden to talk loudly or shout or whistle in the villages by night.

'Words fly away,' he said. 'No-one knows where they go; they are lost and that means a loss of force, for all the women are asleep at night; no ear, no sexual part will catch them.'

Where could they vanish away, these words without echo and with no one to hear them? Was it right to utter, over enclosing walls, in the cracks of doors, in empty streets, words addressed to nobody?

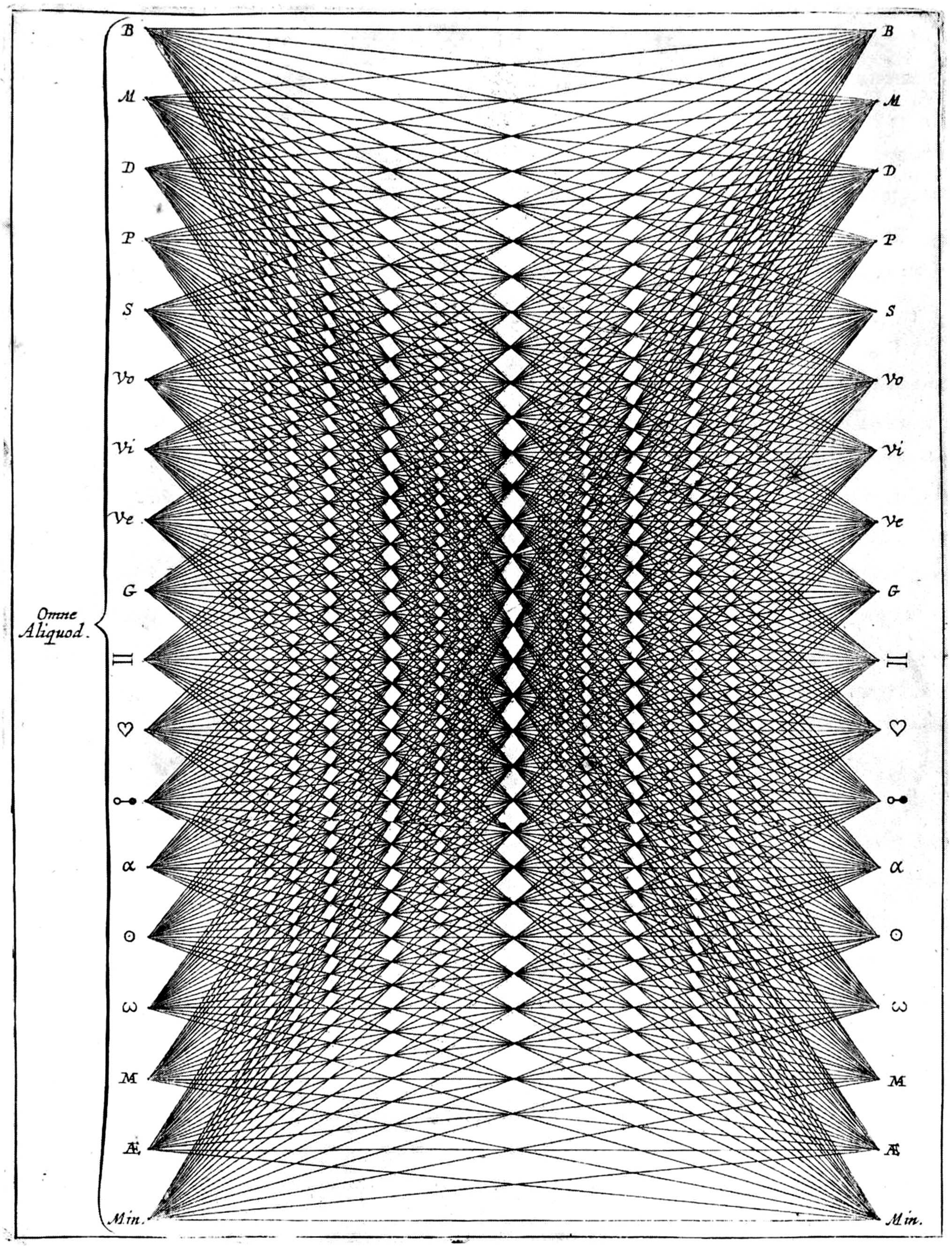
But there was something even worse than lack of hearers. In fact in any village there are always some women who are not asleep. Words spoken by night may enter their ears. They say: 'Who was that?' They never know. What is said at night is the word of an unknown speaker, falling into their wombs at random. If any women were impregnated in this way, the embryo would be the fruit of chance, like that of promiscuous and irregular unions.

But words spoken by night do not fertilize women, and just as blows on the ground at night undo the work done by the smith on his anvil by day, so the word of the night, entering a woman's ear and passing through her throat and liver, coils itself round the womb in an inauspicious way, unwinding the efficacious spirals formed by the word of the day.

Translated by Ralph Butler, Audrey I. Richards, and Beatrice Hooke

Athanasius Kircher

Epilogismus Combinationis Linearis


Omne Aliquod.
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Alphabetic Dimensions

Historical attitudes toward the letter have been governed by one of two orientations, veering either to its minimal role as a functional component of the word, or to its imaginative appeal as an autonomous graphic entity. Roland Barthes's comments on the precarious entente between letter and word carry a stimulating mythic flavor: "Such is the alphabet's power: to rediscover a kind of natural state of the letter. For the letter, if it is alone, is innocent: the Fall begins when we align letters to make them into words."

The generative power of alphabetic characters—as something other than constituent elements in a primary articulation—has long been recognized, appreciated, and exploited by poets and philosophers alike. In Abraham Abulafia's Kabbalistic practice each letter possesses its own semantic value (a function repeated in Thomas Urquhart's universal language proposals). And beyond such semantic possibilities is the lure of the letter's spatial and plastic potential. To the early Irish, Latin was "primarily a written or 'visible' language . . . [apprehended] as much (if not more) by the eye, as by the ear." The early Irish scribes "more readily perceived the written medium as a different manifestation of language with its own 'substance', and with a status equivalent to, but independent of, that of any spoken opposite number it may have had." Prior to this attitude the Aristotelian and Augustinian tenet, that letters were the signs of sounds presenting themselves as the signs of thought, had been seriously contested by Isidore of Seville (ca. 560–636). Isidore considered letters as signs without sounds, not signs of sounds.[1]

Antecedent to the printing press was a scriptural tradition of "inhabited initials" in which the letter functions as a spatial repository for anthropomorphic and zoomorphic fantasies. In the Book of Kells (late eighth or early ninth century) occurs the famous CHI-RO (folio 29), an elaborate motif in which the letter encrypts a human form. The Limbourg brothers, circa 1400, incorporate visual puns in their decorative letters for the Duke of Berry's Très riches heures. *The Duke's lost love is Ursine, a name that playfully bifurcated gives "Urs" (bear) and "sine" (swan). These two creatures appear as a delicate and delicious leitmotif throughout the pages of this lavish book, creating a cryptonymic subtext.*

Beyond the letter's phonetic economy is the region of its optical provocation. Geofroy Tory recounts an etiological myth pertaining to the origin of letters that gained fashionable currency during the Renaissance. Io, metamorphosed into a cow and lacking the power of speech, leaves a scratch mark and the print of her hoof in the sand, thereby spelling out her name: ΙΩ. *In Tory's typographical treatise* Champ Fleury *(1528), single letters receive allegoric treatment along Pythagorean lines. (Tory's lineage can be traced through both Leonardo and Vitruvius in connecting human anatomical proportions to the square and circle.) In constructing his letters Tory employs a grid of one hundred squares (a planar system allegorized by Tory as the nine Muses and Apollo) and sometimes adds anthropomorphic dimensions to his ontological explanations.*

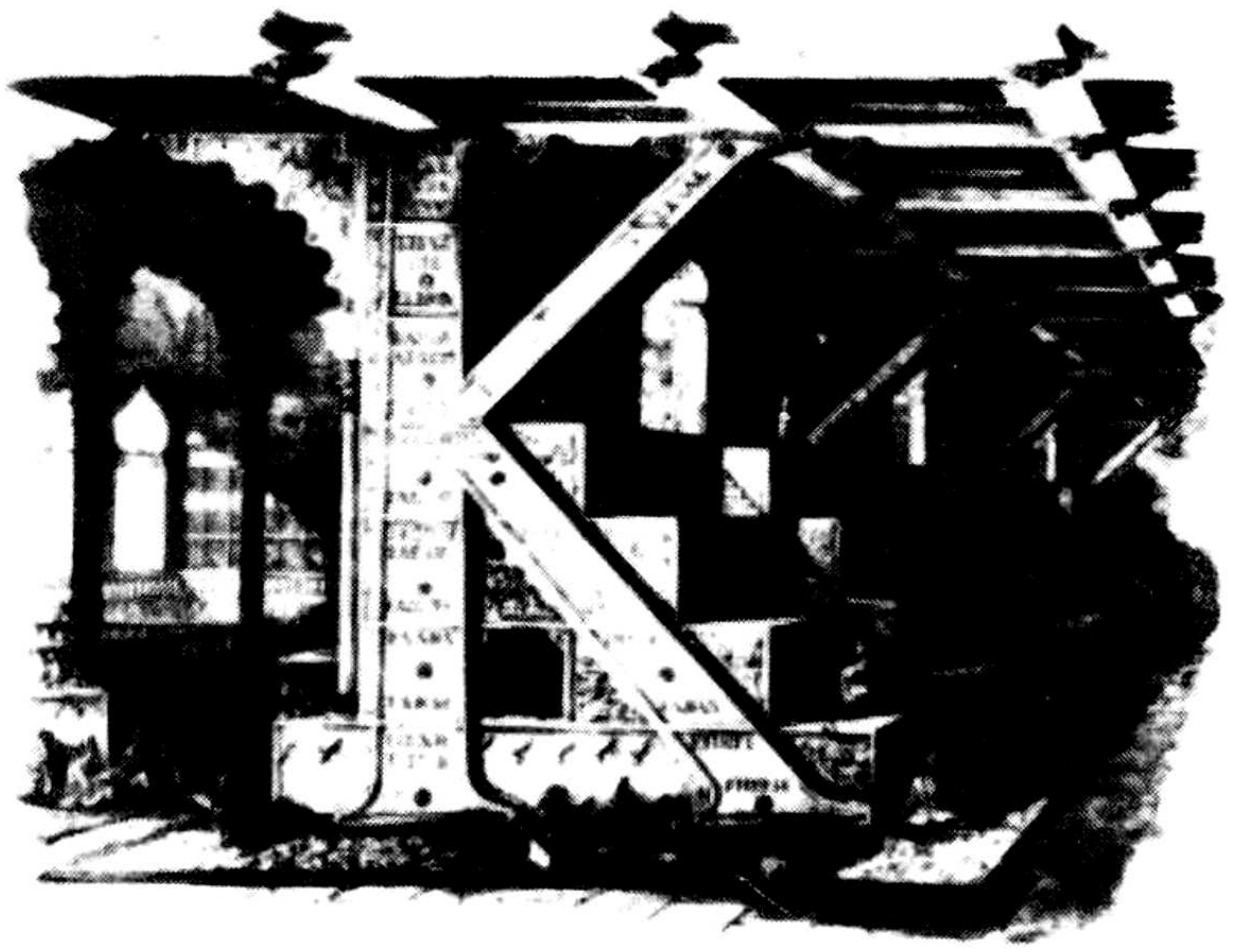
> This letter Q is the only one of all the letters that goes below the lowest line, and I have not been able to find a man who could tell me the reason therefor; but I will tell it and set it down in writing. I have thought and meditated so much on the shape of these Attic letters that I have discovered that the Q extends below the line because he does not allow himself to be written in a complete word without his trusty comrade and brother V [U], and to show that he wishes to have him by his side, he embraces him with his tail from below.

Tory's is less a design for than an explanation of the letter, a hermeneutic contract of reason and fantasy with the alphabet's germane shapes. We might compare these letters-without-words to the bodies without organs theorized by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Despite their Pythagorean inspiration, Tory's letters evoke libertine contours, the material sites of desire whose morphological laws are not inhibited by any grander legislation.

In De augmentis scientiarum *Francis Bacon asserts: "Whatsoever is capable of sufficient differences and those perceptible by the senses, is in nature competent to express cogitations." Walter Kaufmann, contesting Derrida's attribution of the discovery of the signifier's differential nature to Saussure, draws attention to Bacon's biliteral cipher, arguing that "we find in Bacon's cipher an extremely precise development of the binary character of the signifier, the constitution of codes, and the fact that precisely with the aid of a differential code anything can be expressed, amounting to a matrix in terms of which signifiers can be constituted." But an insidious element is introduced when we think of a normal legible text transmitting a completely encrypted code or subtext, behind which stands the computational secrecy of an imperious will.*

The biliteral cipher is part of a wider philosophical project. Bacon describes his "acroamatic" method as a purposeful philosophical procedure of encrypting knowledge, dividing readership into a comprehending cadre of initiates and a vulgar populace. (James Stephens describes it as a discursive method designed to "subtly separate common readers from the learned without offending either group.") Bacon himself betrays the elitism of his method in Book VI of De augmentis. *"The intention of [the acroamatic method] however seems to be by obscurity of delivery to exclude the vulgar (that is the profane vulgar) from the secrets of knowledges, and to admit those only who have either received the interpretation of the enigmas through the hands of the teachers, or have wits of such sharpness and discernment as can pierce the veil." Bacon has a profound distrust of words, whose connotational tendencies and metaphorical accretions imperil effective philosophical communication. An alluring alternative to words is hieroglyphs, which, in Bacon's estimation, offer the Cratylian advantage of a natural connection with things (in Bacon's terminology hieroglyphs are "notes of things by congruity"). The power of the hieroglyph resides in its ability to reduce knowledge to simple sensuous impressions which nonetheless withold a conjectural residue. The chief value of the hieroglyph is to engage the learned imagination. Like Kircher, Bacon believes hieroglyphs to be intrinsically cryptonymic, hiding an* *incommensurate wisdom, complexifying any initial comprehension, yet promising a knowledge attainable through an eventual decipherment.*

In a distinctively Baroque manner, Johann Steingruber develops the practical and nonlinguistic potentials of the letter in a way that avoids the mimophony of Swift (illustrated here in his litteralial writing; see "Spelling, Saving, Spending," p. 449 below). Extending its nonlinguistic possibilities as a functional place and habitat, Steingruber successfully suggests the letter's other as an undeveloped aspect of its visual character. In his fanciful, yet functional, alphabetic architecture (inspired by gardens planted to spell names) he achieves a delightful rendition of Martin Heidegger's concept of language as poetic dwelling. For Heidegger, "Poetry builds up the very nature of dwelling. Poetry and dwelling not only do not exclude each other; on the contrary, poetry and dwelling belong together, each calling for the other." In fixing upon the letter's extralinguistic potential, Steingruber produces not the mere pyrotechnics of a misapplied wit but a vital intersection with a major philosophical discourse. "It is language that tells us about the nature of a thing, provided that we respect Language's own nature." Both Steingruber and Kallir would be sympathetic to this insight, supporting as it does their letteral endeavors. (It invites further reflection in relation to the mimologic midwifery we find in Victor Hugo's written fantasies on letter forms.) Steingruber rises to the challenge of the inhabited initial in a manner distinct from Antonio Basoli's designs, a century later, which fantasize a gratuitous interpolation of letters into building scenarios:



In Herman Damen's text, a philosophical habitat is brought into sight by way of a double sense of "building": the transitive act of creation, and the functional product of a home. To the graphic irreducibility of the written mark Damen adds a tangibility. His Verbal Plasticism engages the three-dimensionality denied script, presenting the letter's materiality as a surplus signification akin to sculp-

ture; a centaur form, or portmanteau of the visible and the tactile. In his prototype "3-Dimensional Alphabet" included here, Damen modifies the Roman capital letters into "stereometrical letter-figures . . . in such a way that from as many points of view and touch as possible the letter-body is recognizable." Incorporating rectangular blocks, flats, beams, cylinders, spheres, truncated pyramids, and tetrahedrons, Damen the "naif alphabetter" realizes Joyce's proposal in Finnegans Wake *that "the proteiform graph itself is a polyhedron of scripture."*[2]

Jonathan Swift's litterалial is a ludic method for writing that exploits an imaginative economy of the signifier. Drawing upon the homonymic potential installed between the letter-syllable and word, Swift effectively condenses meaning while at the same time complicating the normative ratio of part to whole. This playful implosion presents the reader with both a letter "seen" and a word "heard." There is a rich genealogy behind Swift's playfulness upon the letter. LeRoy Breunig cites the grandiose example of the Chevalier de Boufflers whose life of Helen of Troy consists entirely of letters. The work commences L N N E O P Y (Hélène est née au pays grec). However, some of the Surrealist texts of Robert Desnos and Michel Leiris contain serious attempts to demonstrate the capability of letters to actually create thought. We might contrast Swift's ludic pressure upon the autonomous letter with Charles Olson's somatic valorization of the syllable and Benjamin Blood's related approach to the alphabet, both of which situate language within bio-poetic affirmations. In its extreme phonocentrism Blood's alphabet connects linguistic sound to human, tactile sensations: (r = *roughness, vibration;* s = *moisture;* b = *"the disposition to swell out the cheeks and utter an exaggerating and sometimes contemptuous explosion"). We need only compare, however, the Poetical Alphabet to Mallarmé's dissimilar discoveries in* Les mots anglais *to conclude that these sound links are not a natural disposition in the vowels and consonants considered.*

In his first "Manifesto of Letterist Poetry" (1947) Isidore Isou outlines a radical poetic for replacing the word by the letter as the basic unit in communication. Isou's innovations propose "the potential elevation beyond WORDS" and insist that "letters have a destination other than words." Building on Kurt Schwitters's earlier pronouncement that "Not the word but the letter is the original material of poetry," Lettrism envisions nothing less than a reversal of the trajectory of the literary by effectively unmaking words into their constituent letters, thereby promoting a different semantic focus on the letter's "essential," as distinct from the word's "contingent," meaning.[3] *Isou proposes a spectacular poetics of debris with gestural significations allotted to each letter.* A *denotes inhalation,* G *whistling between the teeth,* K *snoring,* P *a belch,* L *gargling. "The New Letteric Alphabet" intends a precise writing system for the voice and carries a metagraphic addition that Isou terms "post-writing." "Metagraphics or post-writing, encompassing all the means of ideographic, lexical and phonetic notation, supplements the means of expression based on sound by adding a specifically plastic dimension, a visual facet which is irreducible and escapes oral labelling."*

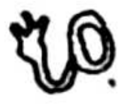
All of the work presented in this section shows a common response to the letter's complex, resonating call. When bp Nichol writes confidently of the word being the compound expression of a single letter, *an epistemic inversion occurs. Owing to the insistent call of its component parts to be granted a first-order prominence, the word ceases to be self-evident. Language, Alfred Kallir insists, "exemplifies the relativity of all spatial and temporal concepts." Linguistic sound and alphabetic shapes are the risen manifestations through "bispheric projection" of psychosomatic primary elements. Kallir attempts a fundamental connection of somatic rhythms and psychic desires as the determinants of the contours of graphic markings. The letter* B *is a complex condensation of the lips in profile, the child's prelinguistic bubbles, and the maternal breasts. Through exhaustive etymological and phonic analyses Kallir arrives at the conclusion that letters and sounds are the fossil traces of primal urges and desires. Man returns as in the Book of Kells to inhabit letters archaeologically: as dwellings, sculptures, and somatic tracings.*

1 The spatial nature of writing first gains emphasis in English in Richard Carew's "The Excellencie of the English Tongue" (1614), which appears as a chapter in William Camden's *Remaines Concerning Britaine.* Carew is the first to suggest that English, as a system of writing, be considered as the material arrangement of letters, not sounds.

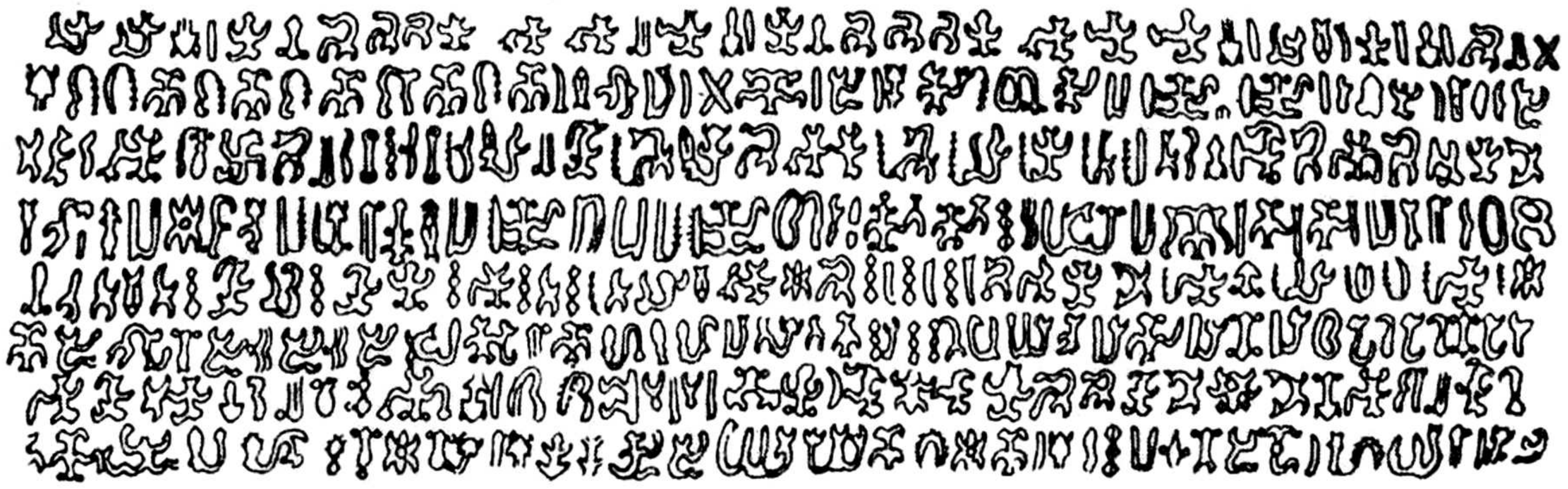
2 French Lettrist Jean-Paul Curtay theorizes a "hypergraphic perspective" in accordance with the principles of modern physics: "we can represent any sign in a CONDENSED FORM (continuous) or in a COMPOSITE FORM (discontinuous). . . . I shall call LETTER any condensed sign and PERLETTER [from per-spective, or "vision through"] any sign composed of other signs." The "perletters" can be combined to form "hyperletters"; and "Integrative hypergraphic perspective, with its letters, its per-letters and its hyper-letters, should be a privileged instrument for the description of all evolution of which the central characteristic is precisely integration."

3 Isou himself not only denied the influence of Schwitters but repudiated his significance altogether. In *Les véritables créateurs et les falsificateurs de dada, du surréalisme, et du lettrisme* (1973) Isou admits a grudging admiration for Tzara and Breton, albeit declaring Lettrism "anti-dada" and these acknowledged predecessors "confusionniste." Others potentially linked to Lettrism are repudiated (including Ball, Khlebnikov, and Artaud, but Isou conveniently ignores chronology here), and Isou's virulence reaches its apex regarding Schwitters, whom he declares a plagiarist, a third-rate imitator, and a crook, a Germanic sub-sub-Cocteau. Isou is equally dismissive of Raoul Hausmann (a forger and plagiarist of Lettrism). According to Henri Chopin, "He hated Hausmann. Isou never met Hausmann, but every week in the last period of Hausmann's life, he sent a letter to Hausmann saying 'ordure, ordure, ordure'." Such scatological vengeance seems an unwitting affirmation of Julia Kristeva's thesis that poetry activates prelinguistic elements in an assault against the symbolic order. But in this case, Hausmann's Dada sound poems appear to have been endowed with symbolic status as elements of a literary history Isou attempted to surmount by sheer denunciation.

The writing system of Easter Island was first discovered in 1868 by Father Zumbohm but not deciphered until 1956 by T. S. Barthel. Carved into wooden tablets, the script was locally known as ko-hau rongo rongo *(*ko-hau = *hibiscus wood,* rongo = *news). Morphological comparisons of the script with Chinese ideograms reveal remarkable similarities. Schwartz, using the evidence of Karlgren, argues for an origin of rongo-rongo via China no later than the eighth century* B.C.*, admitting, however, that "there was no possibility of any kind of direct transfer from ancient China to a Polynesian archipelago [because] Chinese seagoing junks did not appear until about the tenth century* A.D.*" This leads to his speculation "that a symbolism or a system of thought may have appeared in oral tradition, whether mythical or grounded in concrete fact, long before its appearance in a form of writing." Hevesy, however, sees a resemblance to Indus script, which "is the mother of the scripts of all ancient civilized races." The section shown below measures 35 inches long and 4 inches wide and contains a total of 1,547 script-signs. A peculiar feature of rongo-rongo is its optical syntax, in which every line is upside down with respect to the preceding one: to read the script requires a continual repositioning of either the reader or the text. Also of note is a specific glyph depicting the flow of blood from the mother's heart to the pregnant uterus:*

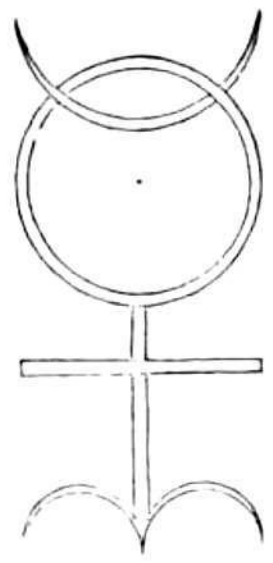


With the aorta, trunk, and two branches of the pulmonary artery clearly visible, this glyph for "heart" shows a remarkable anatomical knowledge of the circulation of the blood that predates Harvey's discovery of cardiac flow by almost two thousand years.



Geofroy Tory

Despite Rabelais's delicious satire of him (as Raminagrobis in Gargantua and Pantagruel*), Geofroy Tory (1480?–1533) enjoyed a reputation as one of the greatest printers in Renaissance France. By way of its trenchant concern to establish designs for letters based on strict mathematical and human proportions, the* Champ Fleury *earned Tory the title of Official Printer to the King. But his influence extended beyond typography. In both a Pythagorean and a humanist vein, Tory held that letters were a divine invention, insisting on the cosmological associations of properly proportioned letter designs. The perfectly designed letter, like man, is made in God's image. John Dee's construction of his Monas Hieroglyphica (1564) combines Tory's model of divinely ordained proportionality with the Kabbalistic sense of the alphabet of nature, utilizing the fundamental features point, line, and circle:*



*In Tory's scheme, Apollo and the nine Muses constitute the ten divisions of the O and I, the circle and the line. Tory finds classical sanction in Virgil's "Shepherd's pipe" (*Eclogues *II, 36) by reading the finger stops of the flageolet or recorder as the nine Muses in one design, and as the seven Liberal Arts in another. By touching up a drawing of a recorder, Tory produces a visual simulacrum of the letter I. In the selection that follows, Tory accounts for the origins and authority of the alphabet in the myths of Io, Hyacinth, the chain of gold, and the golden bough.*

From *Champ Fleury*

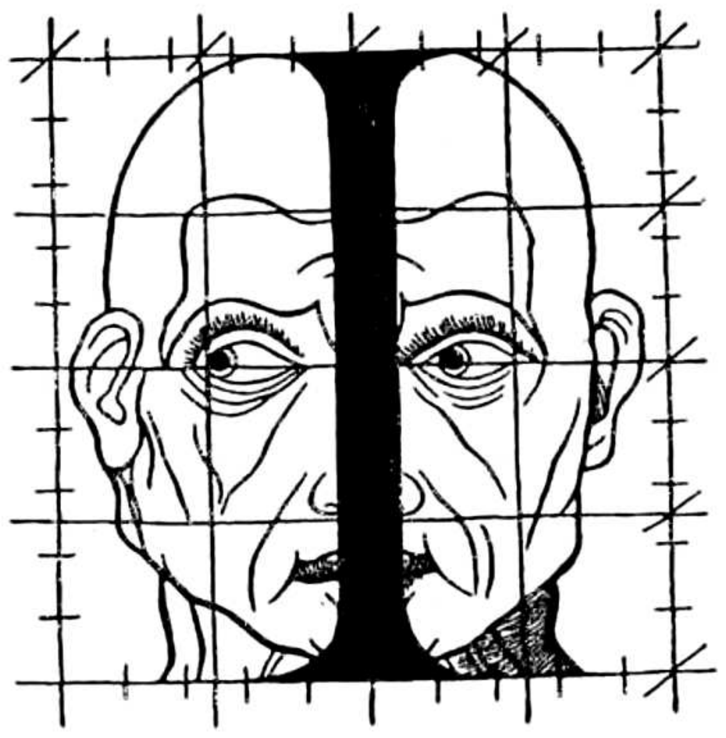
They pretended that Jupiter was once enamoured of the daughter of King Inachus, to such a pitch that, in order to have his pleasure of her alone, he surrounded her with darkness. But Juno, sister & spouse of Jupiter, perceiving that darkness, jealous spouse as she was, suspected what was toward, and came down to earth to see what that darkness signified, it being broad day. Whereupon Jupiter, seeing her approach, in order to conceal his actions, changed his love into the shape of a beautiful young cow. But Juno did not give over her purpose, & began slyly to praise the cow's beauty, & finally asked her husband for her as a gift. Jupiter, finding himself at a loss for an excuse, could not deny her, and gave the cow to her. And straightway, when she had her for her own, she thanked him; and, being in haste to take vengeance for the affront, she gave her in charge to her shepherd, one Argus, who had in his face and all over his head a hundred eyes, which never slept all at the same time, but two by two, while the others kept watch. This Argus treated her harshly, often beating her with his heavy cudgel, throwing stones at her head and tail and legs, driving her hither and yon during the great heat of mid-day, to make her to be stung & bitten by the hornets & big flies. Then, driving her back with blows to her shed, he gave her naught to eat but the bitter bark and tough twigs of trees. The poor creature would gladly have told the said Argus who she was; but instead of trying to speak, she bellowed & gazed at him, weeping bitterly the while.

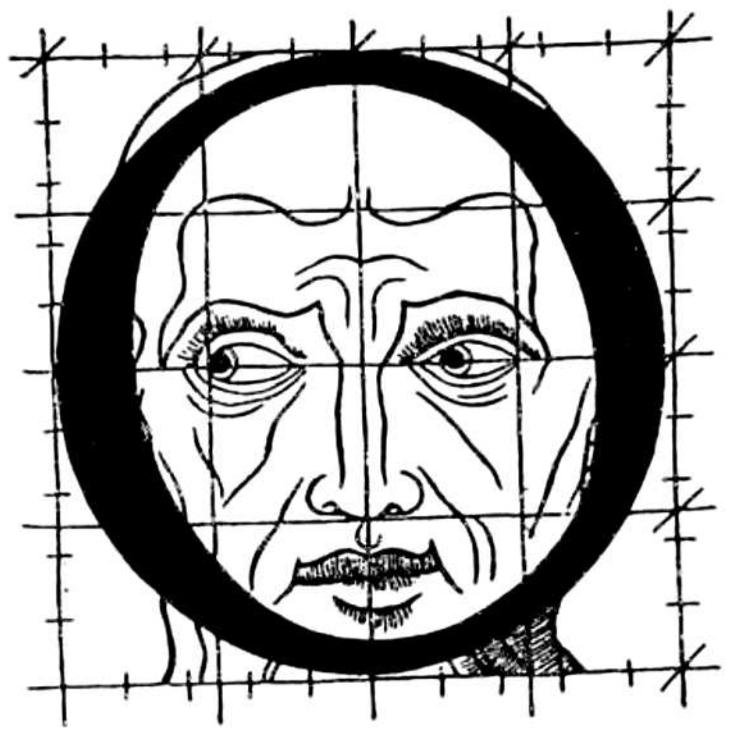
Jupiter, seeing the hardships that his love had to endure, & the cruelty of Argus, one day changed his messenger Mercury into the form of a shepherd keeping kids & lambs, and sent him to Argus, who was tormenting the said cow among the fields and valleys. Mercury came up, leading his flock, & playing most melodiously on his pipes, so that Argus called to him to come and rest on the grass beside him where he lay at full length in the shade of a cliff. . . . Argus begged him earnestly to play again upon the pipes, which he did at once, and with such skill and so melodiously that he lulled him into slumber so profound that all his eyes, which were, as has been said, a hundred in number, fell asleep at once; whereupon Mercury took his shepherd's knife and cut off his head.

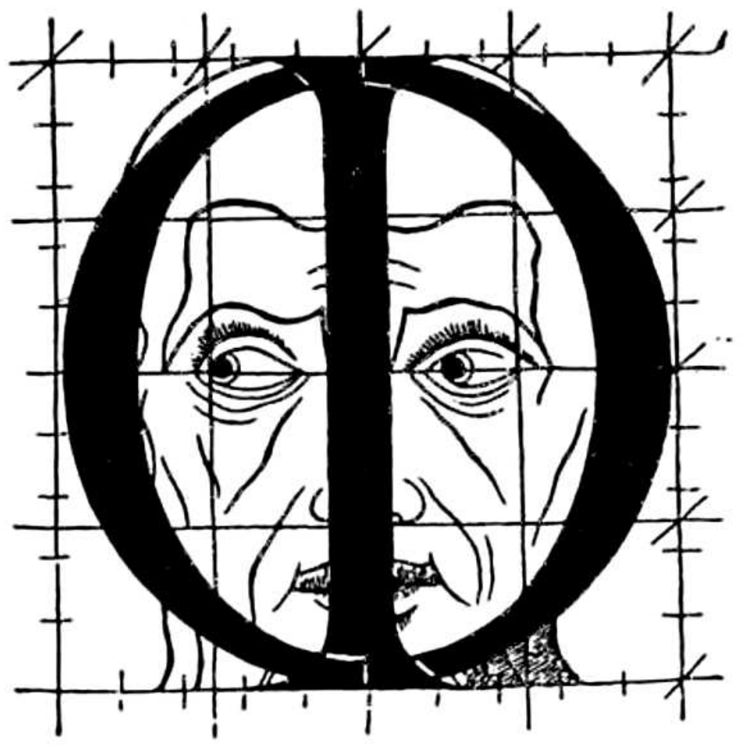
The beautiful cow, seeing that she was delivered from him who had so tormented her, was very glad, & went away, wandering here and there, until she came to a place where her father, Inachus, had been changed into a river-god, otherwise called a sea-god. This Inachus, knowing naught of his daughter's unfortunate plight, and thinking that she was in truth a cow, offered her handfuls of tender and sweet-smelling grasses, & patted her affectionately, touching her with his divine hands on brow and back and flanks, until, as he went and came about her, he saw his daughter's name written in the place where the beautiful cow's foot had pressed the earth: a name of two letters only—I and Ω, from which name the country was called Ionia, and its people Ionians.

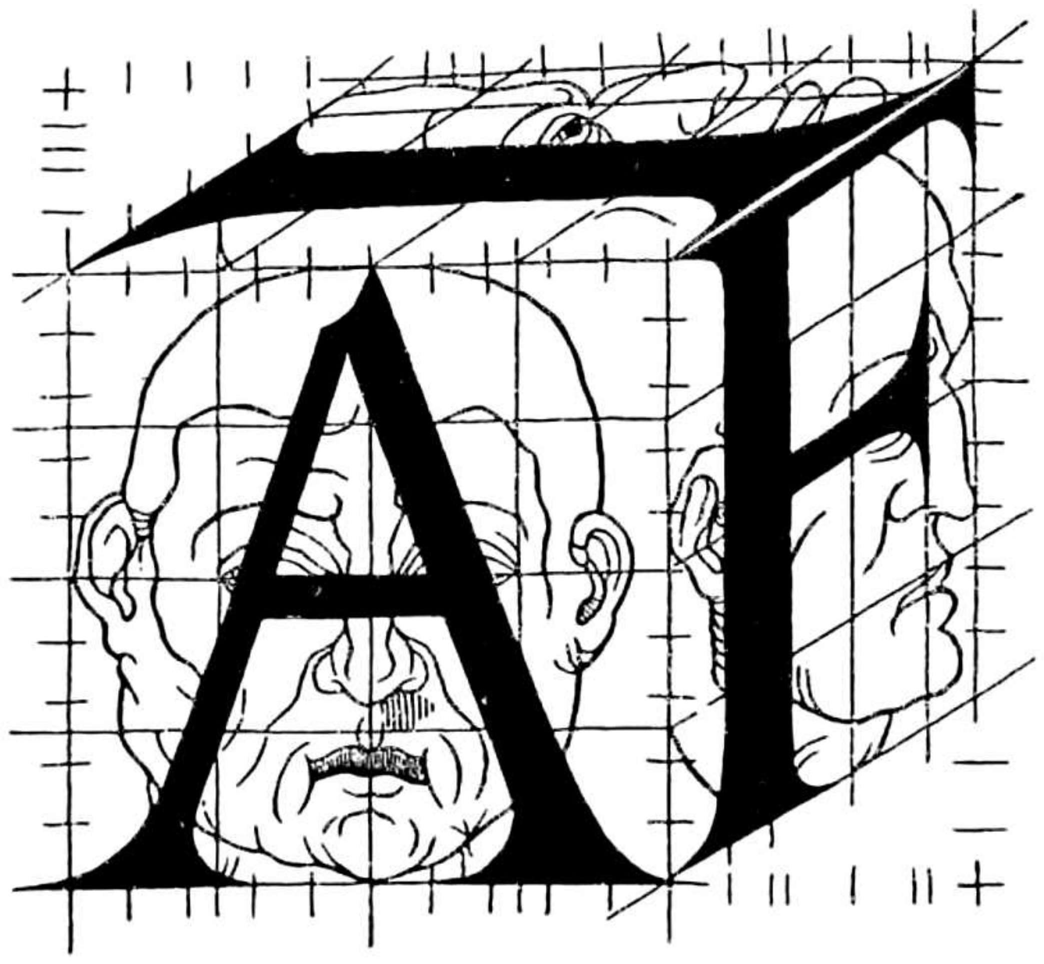
When Inachus saw his daughter's name thus written, & knew that she was changed into a cow, he began to cry out: 'My daughter and dear love, I have sought thee so long over mountains and valleys and have never been able to find thee; but not dreaming of such good fortune, I have met thee, and unthinking, recognized thee.'

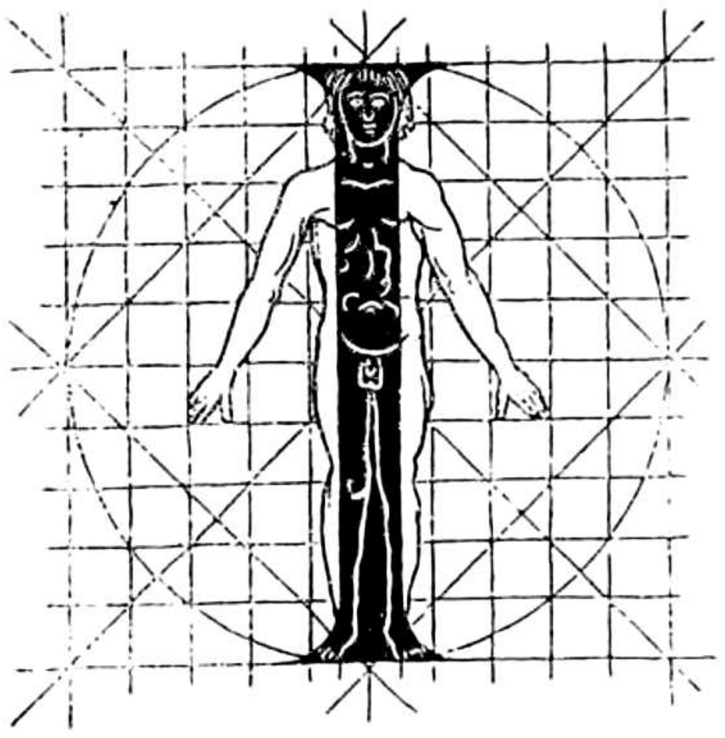
. . .

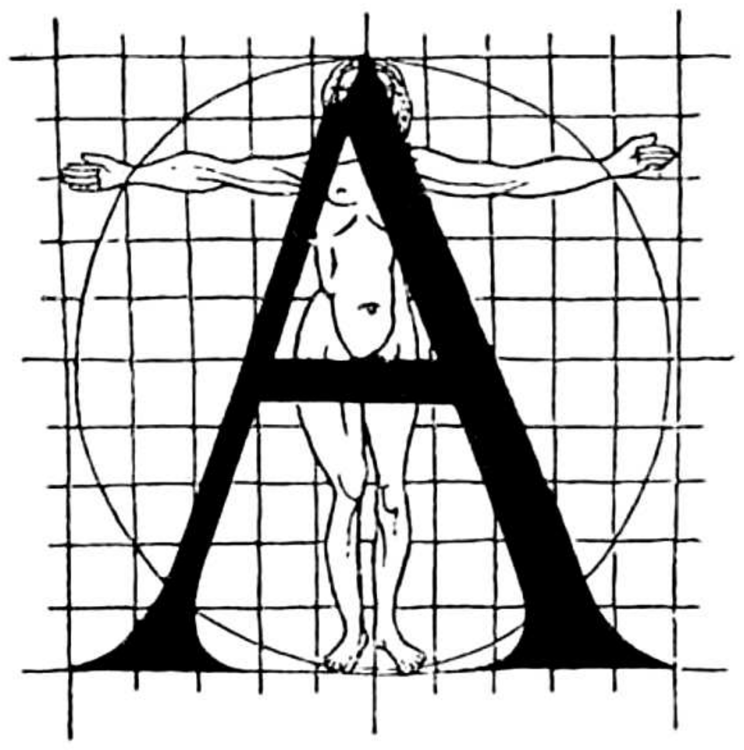












I return then to our said Attic letters, and as to the legend of Io, I say that these two letters, I and O, are those from which all the other Attic letters are made and fashioned. The A is made from the I alone. The B is made from the I, and from the O divided. The C is made from an O alone, divided. The D from an I and O divided. And in like manner all other letters are made either from one of these two, or from both together, as I shall show hereafter, & shall prove, with our Lord's assistance, by figure & proportion.

. . .

I purpose to set down here another little secret in connection with what I have said, that our Attic letters are all derived in shape and made from the I & the O. It is this—that to commemorate the invention and perfection of these letters, the word Io came into use as a proverb signifying exaltation and triumph, as in saying *Io pæan, Io triumphe.*

. . .

Beneath the outer husk of fable, Truth lies hid, & can be known only to him who looks upon it & considers it close at hand. There is another poetic legend of the inventor of this Attic letter, which I will set down here in brief. It is to the effect that Apollo once loved a comely young man named Hyacinthus, with so great a love that he kept him always in his sight & by his side.

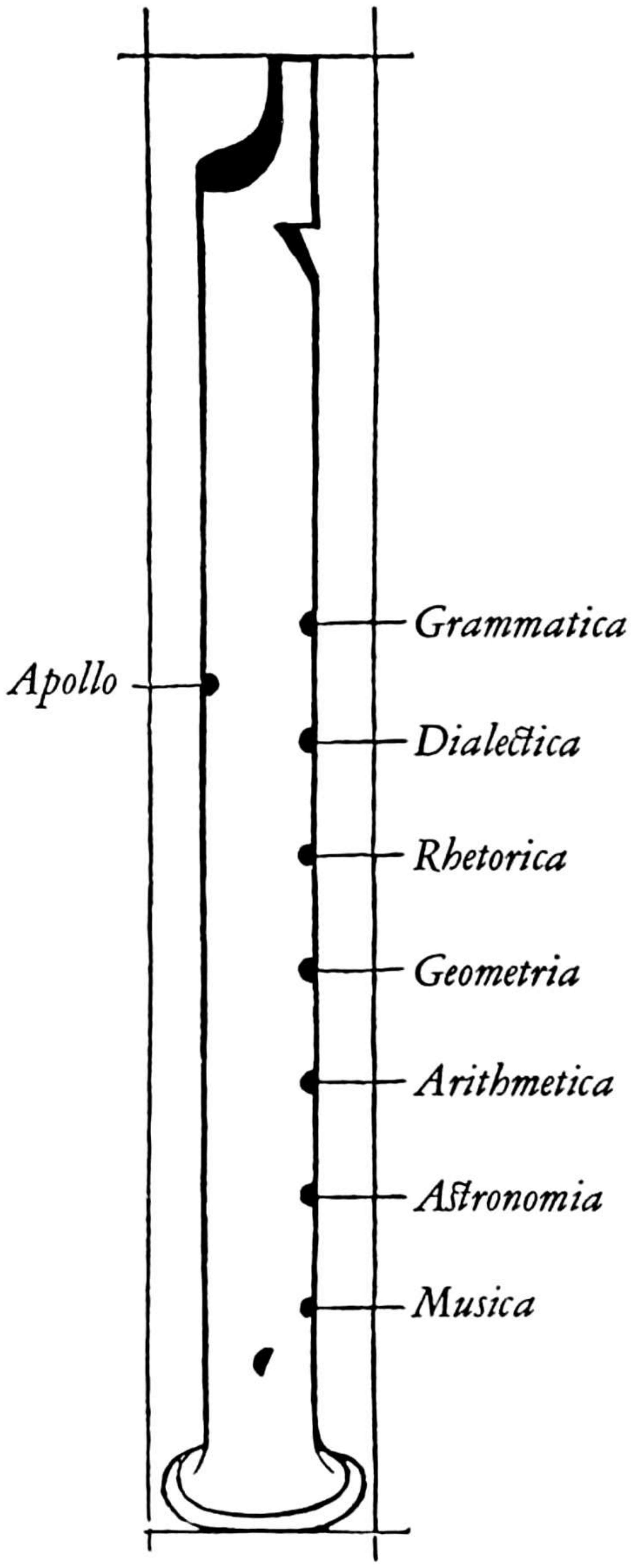
One day Apollo was amusing himself by throwing a huge vessel into the air, to test his strength & increase it by exercise; and once, when he had thrown the said vessel, Hyacinthus passed under it, so that it fell upon him and he was killed. Apollo was so grieved, because of his great beauty and of the great love he had for him, that to atone for his life, which by an evil chance had been taken from him, he transformed him into a lily, of a purple hue, which is called in Paris *lisflambe,* and made in the said lily two letters, Y and A, which we can still see there in some sort, traced in black and yellow on the petals of the lily. The whole plant is called by some doctors H IPIΣ, by others Gladiolus. The root has a sweet odour, and is mixed with other sweet-smelling things for keeping linen in chests.

. . .

I have said that the letter A, which is the first letter of the alphabet,—otherwise called the A B C,—is made from the letter I; and this is true, representing it in a triangle, which is an odd number. The two feet of the A and the head make the said triangle; but it must be placed within a square, which is represented by the word Hyacinthus, which consists of four syllables, *Hy-a-cin-thus.* The ancients, wishing to demonstrate the extraordinary perfectness of their letters, formed and fashioned them according to the proper proportions of the three most perfect figures of geometry—the circle, the square, and the triangle. And because an odd number was always considered among the ancients as a lucky number, and they held it in such great veneration that it had its place in ceremonies and sacrifices—as we still see in our churches the glorious Trinity; and that for saying high mass there are the priest, deacon, and subdeacon; and as Virgil says, in Eclogue VIII, *Numero deus impare gaudet,*—that is to say, God loves an odd number,—they made their first letter in the image of an odd number placed upon the square, which is an even number, to give a good opening & fortunate approach to those who may love and wish to study well-made letters.

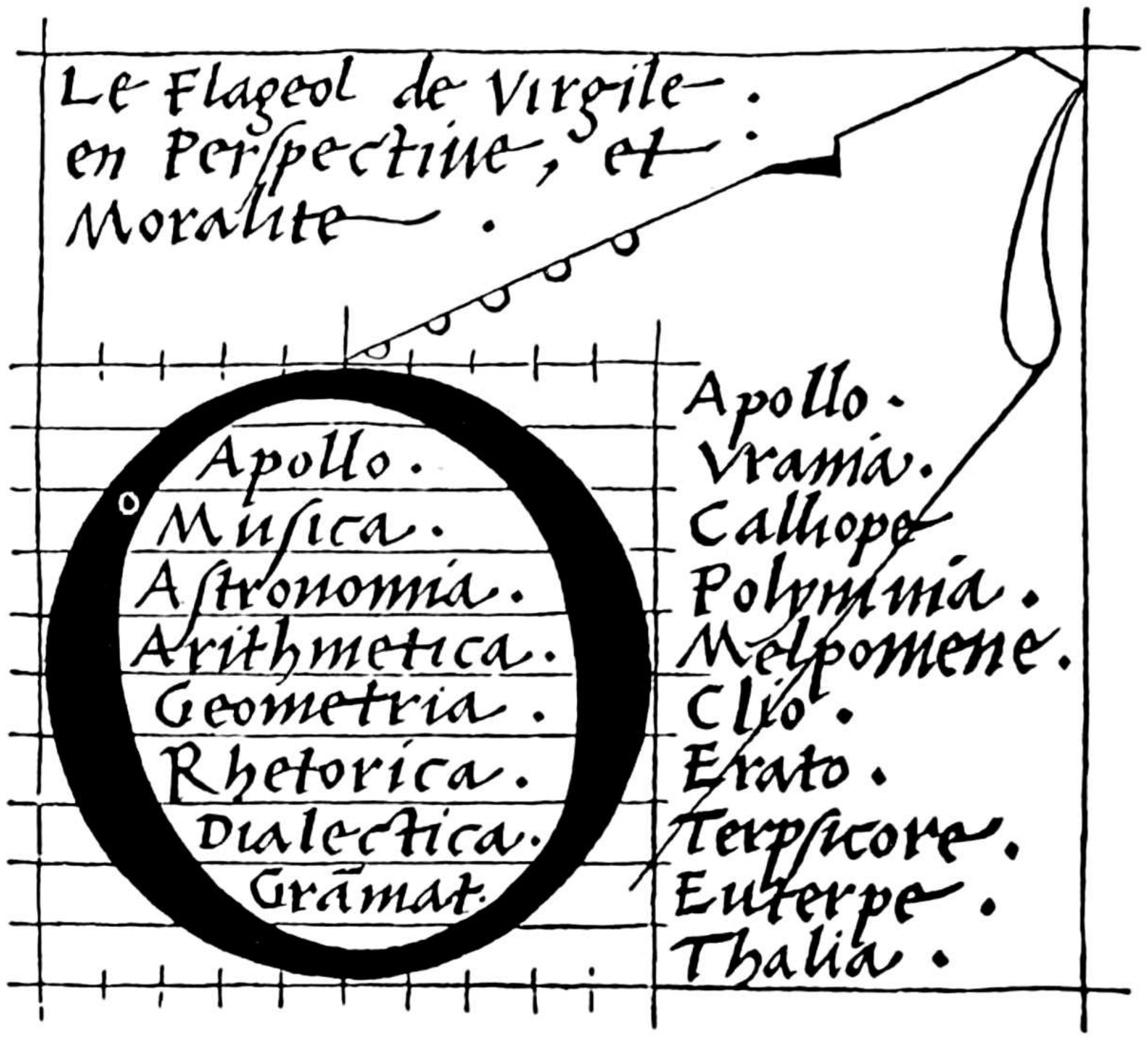
The odd number, as Macrobius says in the first book of *De Saturnalibus,* represents the male, & the even number the female, which means that, as by the conjunction of male & female man is engendered, so by the conjunction of letters syllables are made, and by the conjunction of syllables, words. And speech, by the putting together of well-assorted letters, syllables, and words, is found to be good, polished, and flowing.

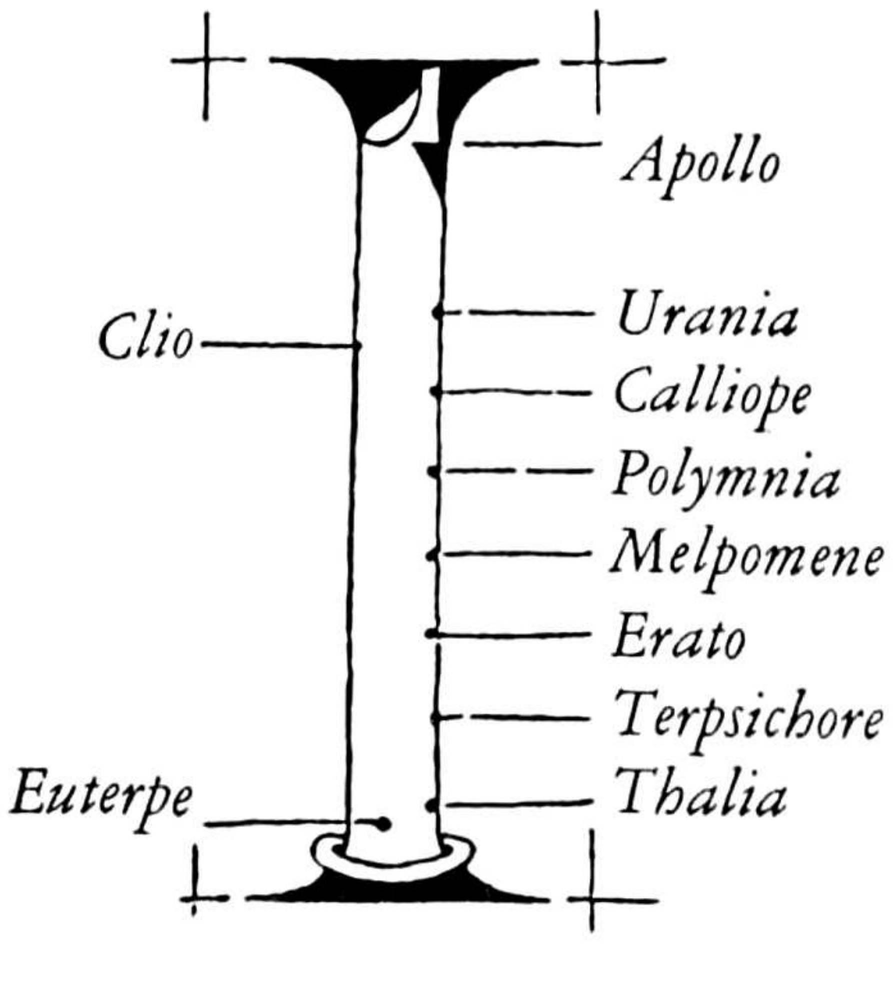
. . .



I cannot go further without giving proof that our said letters were invented through divine inspiration. Certain it is that the King of Greek poets, Homer, near the beginning of Book VIII of his *Iliad,* imagines that Jupiter said that he alone, with a chain of gold, could draw to himself, if he would, all the other Gods, aye, and with them the earth and the sea. Lucian, in his *Dialogues of the Gods,* shows us Mars and Mercury conspiring and muttering against Jupiter because of this said chain, and Macrobius, one of the greatest Latin philosophers, makes mention thereof in his first book, *In Somnium Scipionis:* 'He who shall choose,' he says, 'to meditate and observe, will find a chain and bond formed of intertwined links, which hangs down from heaven to earth'; which is to say that every inspiration, spiritual & corporeal, that we can know here below, proceeds from the sovereign Creator of the whole world. Let us, then, imagine and believe that we see this gold chain hanging down from heaven even to our feet, and this chain is of a length & breadth duly proportioned and adaptable to the symmetrical figure of our model letter I, and we shall perceive that Homer's conceit is to be referred to the inspiration and invention of letters and sciences, which have never been and cannot be known without divine aid and quickening.

. . .


Le Flageol de Virgile.
en Perspective, et.
Moralite.
Apollo.
Musica.
Astronomia.
Arithmetica.
Geometria.
Rhetorica.
Dialectica.
Gramat.
Apollo.
Vrania.
Calliope
Polymnia.
Melpomene.
Clio.
Erato.
Terpsicore.
Euterpe.
Thalia.


Apollo
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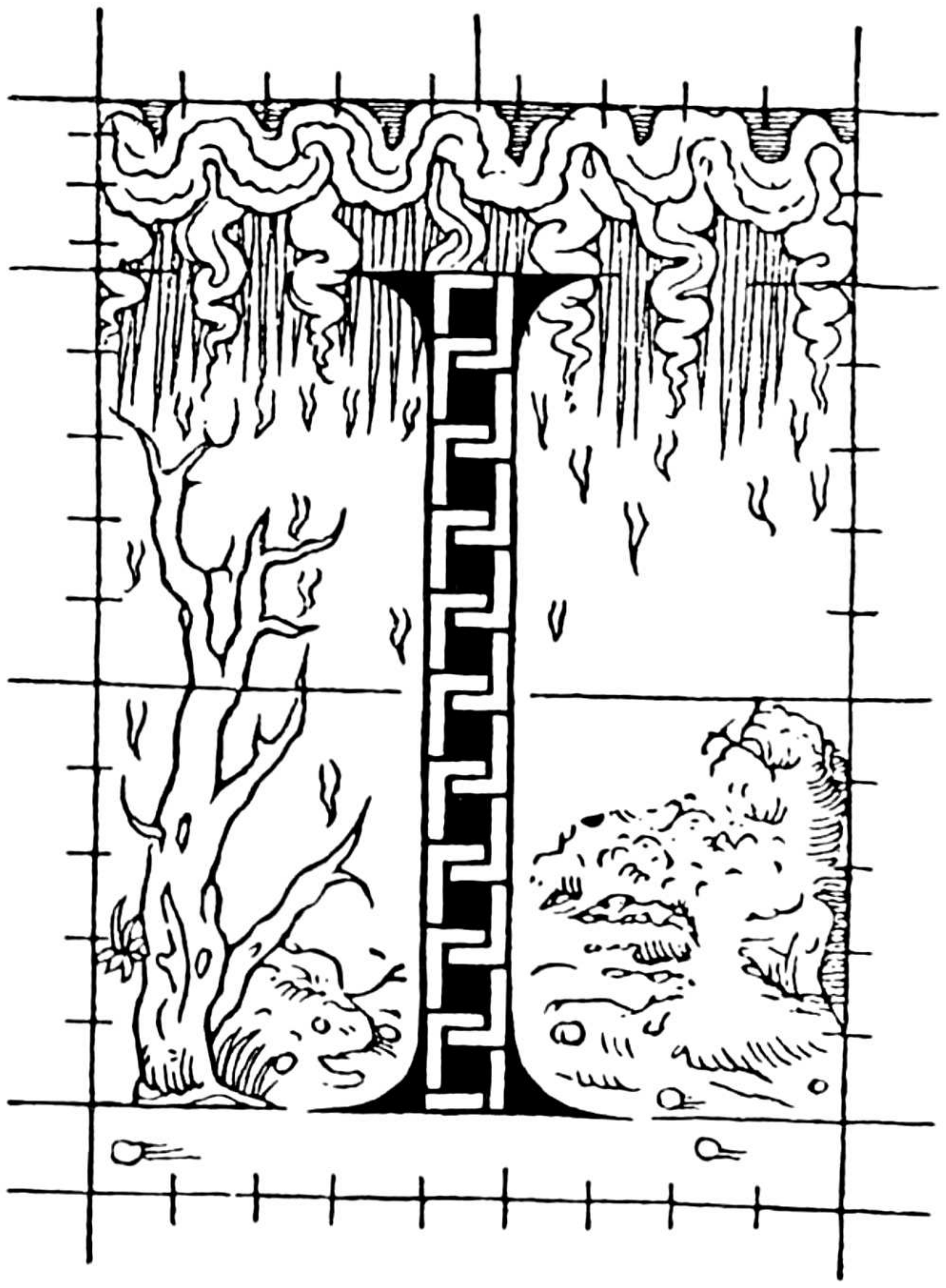


Justly, then, will this chain of gold, which we have imposed upon our I, signify to us, by allegory, that the knowledge & inspiration of letters comes to us from Heaven and from God; that these letters are so closely akin and so nearly connected that they all have a share in each other; likewise the Sciences, and consequently the Virtues.

Virgil, a great imitator of Homer, instead of this chain of gold, imagined a Golden Bough for his Æneas, which means, in allegory, that every learned and virtuous man carries in his hand—that is to say, for his use—a Bough of Wisdom, which is of gold as being the most precious of all metals. The Sibyl, that is to say, divine inspiration, says to Æneas, that is to say, to the devoted lover & observer of virtue, which consists chiefly in letters and goodly learning, the words that follow; and they are written in Book VI of the said Virgil's *Æneid*. . .

Imagine that you see a lady named Divine Inspiration, saying to the zealous student and virtuous youth what follows.—'Hearken,' she says, 'to what it is meet that you should do before ought else. There is in yonder earthly forest a Golden Bough hidden in a great densely leaved tree. This bough has very soft and pliable leaves and twigs, and is sacred to Juno, the Goddess of that place. It is encompassed by a great number of ancient trees and by shady vales. And know that no man can enter into the secret places of the earth until he shall have plucked the said golden bough. For the beautiful Goddess Proserpine has decreed that it be given her as a present. As soon as you have plucked one, there will spring forth another, of gold and of the same form. Therefore, search well and gaze with all your eyes, & as soon as you have found it, pluck it with your hand; for you will easily obtain it, since it will let itself be pulled from its place, as of its own will and at your pleasure.'

Thus this beautiful golden bough, like Homer's golden chain, signifies Learning; & its leaves, which are three-and-twenty in number, are the three-and-twenty letters of the Alphabet. . . .

And should any ask me how I know it, I should say that the noble Poet Virgil so taught me, the while I gazed upon his Æneas, seeking the said golden bough that he might go down into the dark places of profound meditation upon the vices & virtues of this mortal life. And if some noble heart would fain learn by touch and by sight where he may find this number three-and-twenty, let him read in the sixth book of the *Æneid*, where, as I have quoted, Virgil introduces the Sibyl counselling Æneas to seek the golden bough, and he will find that the Poet wittingly and covertly makes her speak in three-&-twenty verses, of which the first is:

Tros anchisiade facilis descensus auerni.

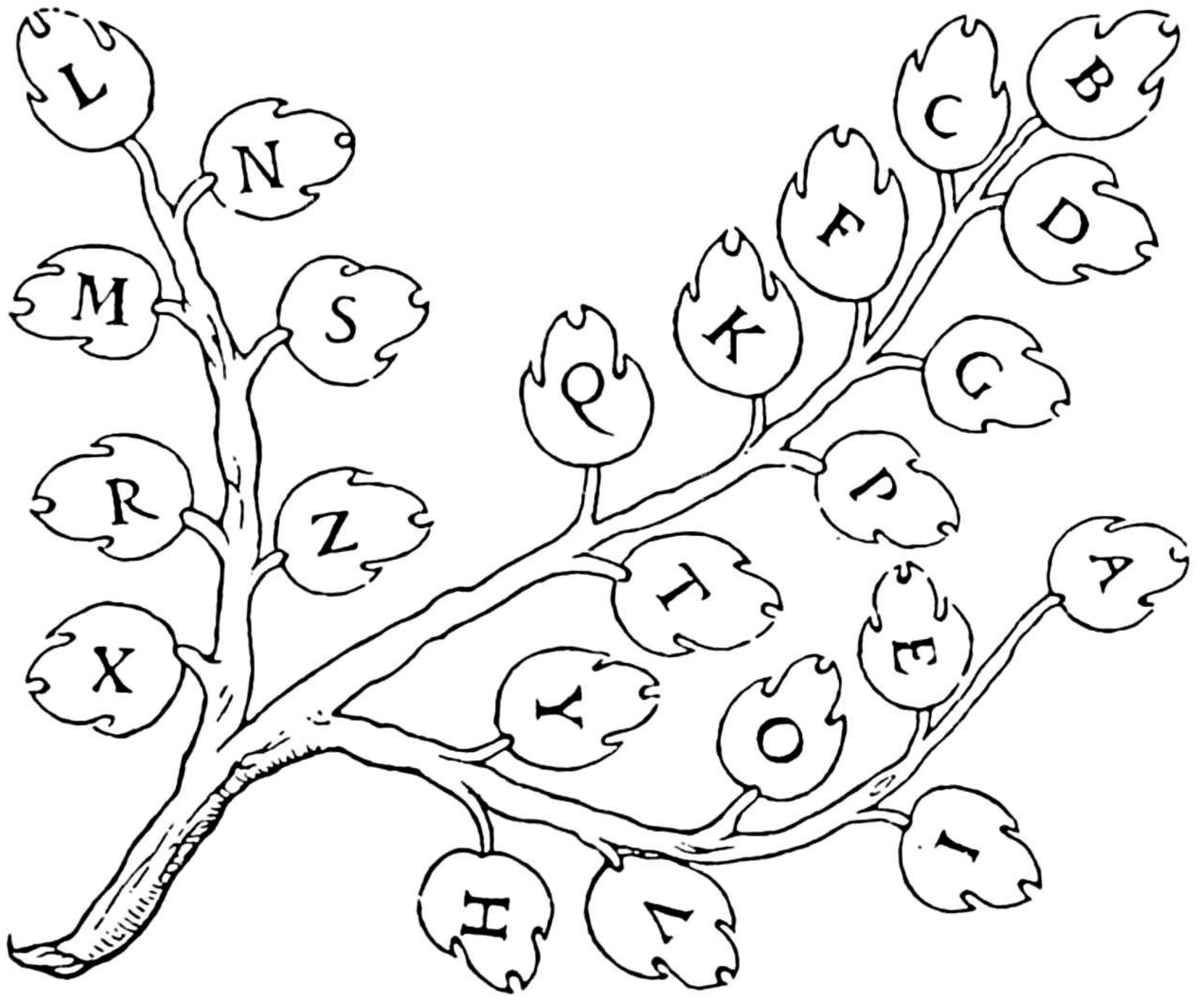
And, proceeding, the last verse is:—

Vincere nec duro poteris conuellere ferro.

Counting these two & those that are between them, we shall find three-and-twenty verses.

. . .

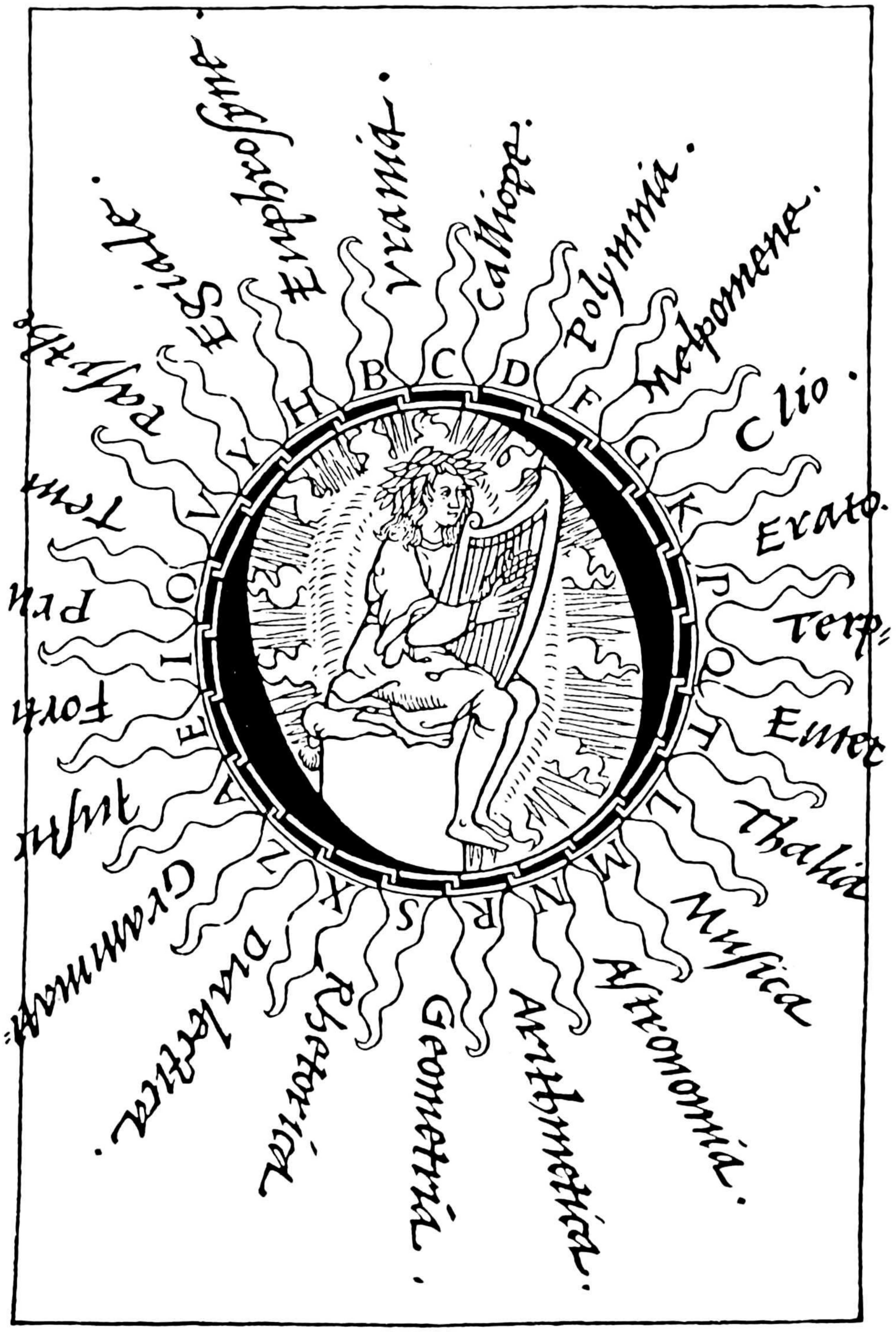
I have drawn the golden bough according to Virgil in the verses hereinbefore quoted, which, as I have said, signifies learning; & beneath it the limb without leaves, which denotes ignorance. But note well how, on the said golden bough, I have drawn three twigs, of which the one in the middle, which is the chief & longest one, has nine leaves, wherein are written, one apart from another, the nine mutes, B, C, D, F, G, K, P, Q, T, which represent the nine Muses. Then, on another twig, at the left side, there are seven leaves wherein in like manner are written the seven semi-vowels, L, M, N, R, S, X, and Z, which represent the seven Liberal Arts. Likewise the third, right-hand twig has on it seven leaves, wherein are written the five Latin vowels, A, E, I, O, V, and one Greek one, Y, and with them the aspirate H, which, because it is not deemed a true letter, is written in the lowest leaf. By which six vowels and aspirate, we understand the four Cardinal Virtues & the Graces, of comely grace and virtue. Thus, then, in the said Golden Bough of Virgil are comprised and covertly suggested the nine Muses, the seven Liberal Arts, the four Cardinal Virtues, and the three Graces, which make the full number of the three-and-twenty letters of the Alphabet.



To the best of my ability, I have by God's grace, according to my humble theory & philosophical speculation, adapted the Homeric chain of gold to our model letter I, & Virgil's golden bough to the nine Muses and their companions. Now if it be our Lord's pleasure, I purpose to extend the said Homeric chain of gold, which I have drawn in the I alone, of ten links, which represent the nine Muses & their Apollo, to three-and-twenty links arranged evenly around the other model letter, O, which said links will represent, as the leaves of Virgil's golden bough have done, the three-and-twenty-letters of the Alphabet, & likewise the nine Muses & their companions. All of which matter, to make it the better understood I have drawn below as best I could, leaving it for those who can and will, to do better.

In this next figure I have designed and drawn the O in its superficial square, according to its proper measurement of ten units of height & ten of breadth, divided between eleven perpendicular & horizontal lines, as you can easily perceive by the eye and by the compass, to show the accord between the said three-and-twenty links and the three-and-twenty letters which I have written in the rays of the Sun, each by itself, one after another, at the right of each link; and outside, between the rays of the Sun, I have also written & placed the nine Muses, the seven Liberal Arts, the four Cardinal Virtues, & the three Graces, each apart from the rest. And in the very center of the O, I have drawn and portrayed Apollo playing upon his divine lyre, to show that the linking together and the round perfection of the Letters, Muses, Liberal Arts, Cardinal Virtues, and Graces are inspired by Apollo, that is to say, by the Sun, or, if you like it better so, say by our true God and Creator, who is the veritable Sun, without whose aid all body & spirit is forever numb and vain, & without which we can have no knowledge of letters or of learning, or of any virtue whatsoever.

Translated by George B. Ives


Euphrosyne.
Vrania.
Calliope.
Polymnia.
Melpomena.
Clio.
Erato.
Terp.
Euter
Thalia
Musica
Astronomia.
Arithmetica.
Geometria.
Rhetorica.
Dialectica.
Grammatica.
Iustit
Forti
Pru
Tem
Pasythe
Egiale.
B C D F G K P Q T L M N R S X Z A E I O V Y H

From *Champ Fleury*

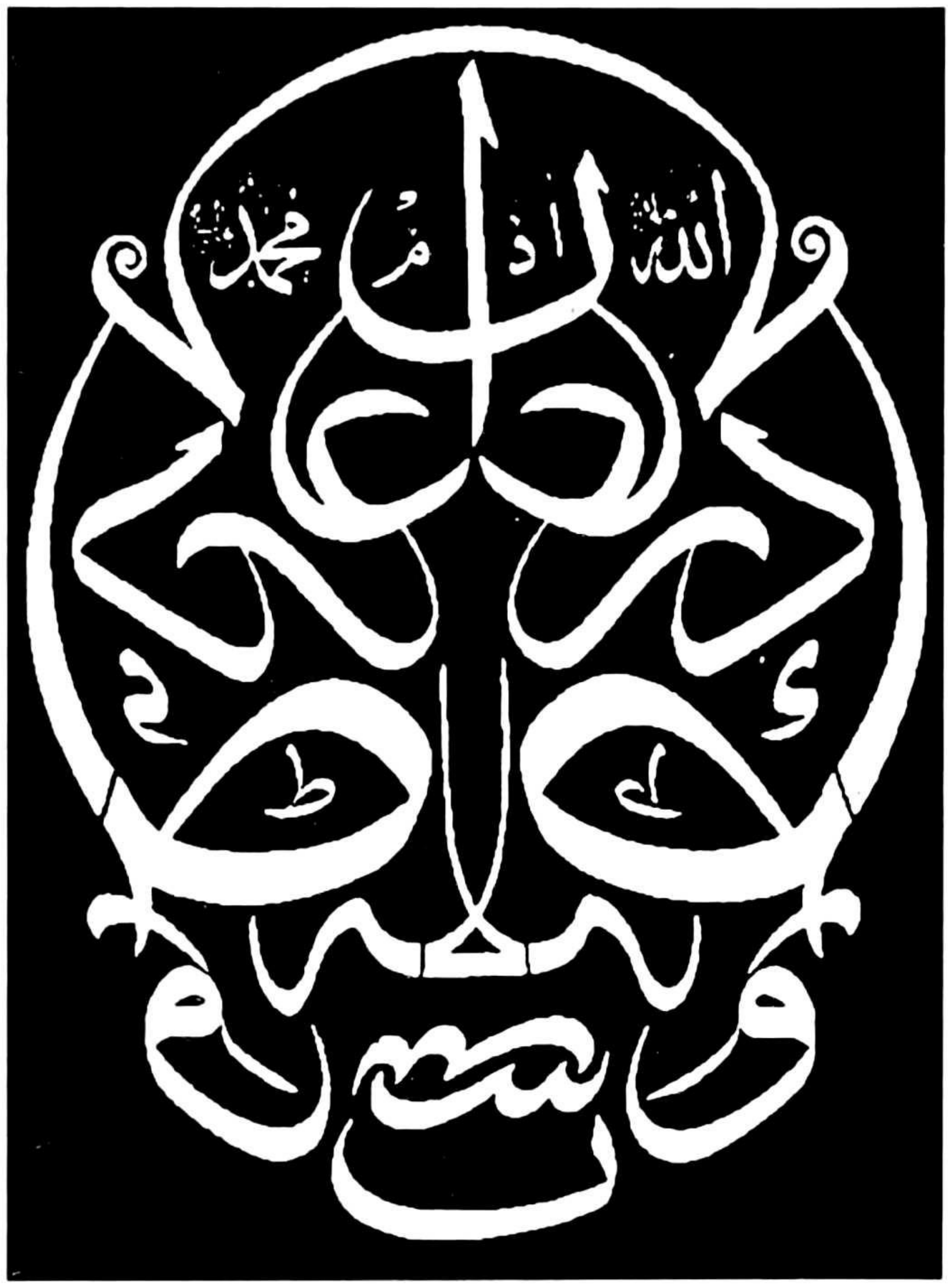
*Islamic mysticism includes practices of devotional linguistic permutation, both orally (in the "science of breath" or "respiratory cabala") and in writing (*jafr *or science of letters). The Shaikh Ibn al-'Arabi envisions a divine reciprocity in which "the letters are containers for meanings, while the meanings are the spirits of the letters." The Hurufi—adepts of* jafr*—regard God as a power emanating through the word, phoneme, or voice. In the incantation practice of Da'wah (which involves dietary prescriptions and ablutions), a theology of the alphabet is elaborated in attributes of God, numbers, the elements, the seven planets, and twelve Zodiacal signs in a serial parallelism also including guardian angels, resident genius, and perfume. Rafael is the guardian angel, for example, in the* waw *or sixth letter, the attributes of which are friend, kindness, love, air, Gemini, Mercury, and camphor. The divine letter and the divine name are interchangeable. Sufi master al-Bistami says that "the letters . . . supplement revelation by making flash before the astonished eyes of the mystic the redemptive enlightenment of the* kashf *[raising the veil] and a perception of events hidden in past, present or future time."*

For Muslims a mark on the forehead is the sign of unique piety, evidence of repeated and continual prostrations. This principle of autographism testifies to the honorary status of signs, and of writing in particular. The textual analogue is readily available for expressing wisdom or insight: a poet writes that "the true men of God in this world read from the tablet of the forehead the script of the heart." The notion of letters resolved into a primal material substance—which is itself the script of divine creation—is pondered by the Shiite mystic Haydar-i Amuli in a passage that distinguishes the arbitrariness of the sign (or letter) from the essentiality of the medium:

> Letters written with ink do not really exist qua letters, for the letters are but various forms to which meanings have been assigned through convention. What really and concretely exists is nothing but the ink. . . . One has to cultivate, first of all, the eye to see the selfsame reality of ink in all letters, and then to see the letters as so many intrinsic modifications of the ink.

Curiously William Carlos Williams, in the truculent posture of the literary vanguard, makes a similar declaration: "Words are not permanent unless the graphite be scraped up and put in a tube or the ink lifted. Words progress into the ground."

Islamic tradition has it that the pen was the first creation of God; and the force of divine will is envisioned in a calligraphic metaphor: "Man's heart is between two of God's fingers, and He turns it as He pleases." Accordingly, the letters are described as forms of worship. A devotional aura emanates *from letters; and the small child's initiation into the sacred formula, "In the name of Allah the Compassionate and Merciful," is sometimes written in a sweet liquid on a slate to be licked off. Letters figure predominantly in poetry, as "every poet could write a whole poem on the letters as revealed in his beloved's face." The entire face is susceptible to lettristic elaboration, as in this heretical fifteenth-century Harufi depiction of the divine man:*



Most enigmatic are the inexplicable isolated letters at the beginning of certain Suras in the Koran, known as futuhat. *"The mystical view sees in the* futuhat *a kind of sublime signal, a wink of the eye, a tip of divine intuition penetrating the cycle of existence, granting pause for meditation on these crystalline letters where meaning is dissolved. Then the letters may combine, according to the power of the mystic's insight, to reimpose meaning upon the random and arbitrary nature of their dispersal. But perhaps one should consider how Allah has sanctioned this random quality of chance. It is chance itself."*

A mystical alphabet according to the order of letters in Sanskrit, elaborated in the Dhauqi branch of the Chishtiyya Sabiriyya:

The list of the Lords (*rabb*) and those who are ruled by them (*marbūb*), that is, the Divine Names and the names on the plane of creation, the pronounced letters, and the lunar mansions.

Divine Name	Name of the Plane of Creation	Letter
1. *badīʿ*, Originator	*ʿaql-i kull* Universal Intellect	*alif*

ا

This attribute is special to God Most High and is the origin of the capacity to create from nothing, which is directed to the Universal Intellect, which is also called the Pen and is the locus of manifestation for *ibdāʿ*, creating from nothing, because from the Pen the word *kun*, "Be!" comes into existence without the previous existence of matter, time, and likeness. The name *badīʿ* is also directed toward the letter *alif*, out of which all letters proceed, and is likewise directed toward the mansion of *sharatayn*, the first of all lunar mansions.

Divine Name	Name of the Plane of Creation	Letter
2. *bāʿith*, Invoking	*nafs-i kull* Universal Soul	*hā'*

ه

Bāʿith points to the evoking capacity by which the Universal Intellect works on the bodies by mediation of the soul. From the Universal Intellect the Divine Order, that is, "Be!" has come into existence. The Universal Soul is also called the Well-Preserved Tablet; that is the first thing created, which was existentialized through the Universal Intellect.

Divine Name	Name of the Plane of Creation	Letter
3. *bāṭin*, The Inner	*ṭabīʿat-i kull* Universal Nature [*physis*]	*ʿayn*

ع

It is the origin of the natural capacities, in which the things are hidden. They appear through the *nafas-i raḥmānī*, "the breath of the Merciful."

Divine Name	Name of the Plane of Creation	Letter
4. *ākhir*, The Last	*habā* Primordial matter	*ḥā'*

ح

The essence of the primordial matter (*hayūlā*) is the last step in the existence of bodies. Existence in this rank is of extreme beauty because it descends from utter fineness (*laṭāfat*) into utter density (*kathāfat*). The forms of the created bodies in the world of composed things appear in it.

Divine Name	Name of the Plane of Creation	Letter
5. *ẓāhir*, The Outward	*shakl-i kull* Universal Form	*ghayn*

غ

The appearance of the primordial matter depends upon the Universal Form. Without form and shape, the primordial matter cannot become visible. . . . The Universal Form comprises all forms and figures like the *falak-i aṭlas,* which comprises everything that is in the spheres, the stars, and the mansions.

6. *ḥakīm,* The Wise *jism-i kull* *khā’* خ
Universal Body

The combination of the various natures comes to pass through wisdom. The Universal Body is the first form of nature in which the various natures manifest their order, as the Universal Body accepts heat and cold, humidity and dryness. God Almighty has made manifest in it the different dispositions of the various forms.

7. *muḥīṭ,* The All-Embracing The Throne *qāf* ق

The Divine Throne embraces all bodies. Since the Greatest Throne is embracing and encircling, it belongs to the bodies.

8. *shakūr,* The Grateful The Footstool *kāf* ك

This is the beginning of the legal prescriptions and prohibitions and animates words that cause thanks.

9. *ghanī,* The Rich, *falak-i aṭlas* *jīm* ج
The Independent *falak-i burūj*
The highest sphere

Ghanī is also called *ghanī ud-dahr,* the one who is independent of Time, for from this name, Time [and fate] seeks and receives help. Near the *falak-i aṭlas* is the sphere of the zodiacal signs. The *falak-i aṭlas* has no need for stars.

10. *muqtadir,* The Powerful The sphere of mansions *shīn* ش

In the world of elements these mansions are the causes of good and evil. This is the ceiling of hell and the floor of paradise.

11. *rabb,* The Lord Sphere of Saturn *yā’* ى

The first sphere is that of Saturn, connected with Saturday. It is the ascendant of princes and great men. It is the station of the *bayt al-ma‘mūr* and the *Sidrat al-muntahā,* the “Lotos tree of the utmost border.” Abraham is located there. The *bayt al-ma‘mūr* is located exactly opposite the earthly Ka‘ba. It has two gates, one in the east, the other one in the West. The eastern one is called Gate of the Appearance of Lights, through which every day 18,000 angels enter. The western gate is the Gate of the Occultation of Lights through which these angels disappear, not to return till the day of resurrection. The *Sidrat al-muntahā* is also in this sphere; it is in symbolical language a tree whose leaves are like an elephant's ear and whose fruits are like earthen vessels. The blessed eat its fruits by which dishonesty disappears from their breasts. On its leaves is written *Subbūḥ quddūs rabb al-malā'ik,* "Most Glorified, Most Holy, the Lord of the angels." The works of mankind end here; that is why it is called the tree of the outmost limit. Beneath this tree is Gabriel's abode. On this tree is written: "What no eye has seen and no ear has heard, and what did not come to any human being's mind."

ض

12. *ʿalīm,* The Knowing Sphere of Jupiter *ḍād*
With this sphere, Thursday is connected. Divine inspiration and making alive the hearts of scholars with knowledge, kindness, and good ethical qualities is connected with this name and this sphere. To obtain one's livelihood and to heal the sick are also connected with this place. Moses is located in it, and its overseer is Michael.

ل

13. *qāhir,* The Overpowering Sphere of Mars *lām*
Its day is Tuesday. Aaron and John the Baptist are located there. This sphere is the locus of manifestation of Divine grandeur and revenge. The worship of the angels of this sphere is to bring distant things near, to make the invisible visible, to entrench faith in the heart, to defend the world of mysteries against the infidels, and [they are further occupied with] revenge, blaming, and pressing the souls. Its spirituality is that power that helps and strengthens those who wield the sword and take revenge.

ن

14. *nūr,* The Light Sphere of the Sun *nūn*
From its light the whole world becomes illuminated. This is the axis of all spheres and of the world [being the fourteenth among the twenty-eight stations]. God Most High has proclaimed it to be the *makān-i ʿulyā,* "the highest place." Jesus, Solomon, David, and Jirjis [St. George], and most of the prophets are located there. It is also one station among the "Muhammadan stations." Its day is Sunday, and its governor Israfil [the angel that blows the trumpet for resurrection]. It is a place where the Divine lights and mysteries descend. Lowliness and height, pressing and relief, and all the affairs beneath the *sidrat al-muntahā* to what is under the earth are under the disposal of the angels of this sphere.

ر

15. *muṣawwir,* The Former, Shaper Sphere of Venus *rā'*
Its day is Friday. It is the place of the *ʿālam al-mithāl* [the world of spiritual similitudes] and Joseph's place. Its governor is Sura'il, who responds to the calling angels. He forms the picture of the child in the wombs of the mothers. The angels of this sphere are ordered to inspire and

teach and instruct children, to console sad hearts and show mildness and kindness and love, and to kindle the fire of love in the hearts of the lovers and to preserve the figure of the beloved ones in their hearts, and also to bring messages and to carry out the orders of those with authority (*ahl-i tamkīn*).

16. *muḥṣī,* The Counting   Sphere of Mercury   *ṭā’*   ط
Mercury is the scribe of heaven; his day is Wednesday. It is Noah's dwelling place. The governor there is Nu‘ahil. Reckoning and writing, sending down of knowledge, guidance toward the Divine lights, and making spiritual forms pass over into bodily shapes are connected with this sphere.

17. *mubīn,* The Clear, Clearing   Sphere of the Moon   *dāl*   د
Its day is Monday. Adam resides there. Isma‘il is the governor. The relation between the earth and this sphere is like that of the body and the spirit. It is entrusted with the arrangement of the earth. Insight concerning the fates of times can be attained through it.

18. *qābiḍ,* The Pressing, Grasping   The ethereal sphere   *tā’*   ت
The ethereal globe and what is in it; it is the one with which dryness is connected.

19. *ḥayy,* The Living   The sphere of air   *zā’*   ز
It is the area in which clouds and wind and vapor are. This area [contains] the provision for the continuation of life. The angel of thunder is created by means of the air.

20. *muḥyī,* The Life-Bestowing   The sphere of water   *sīn*   س
God Almighty has made everything appear from water, as it is said in the Koran: "And We made everything alive from water" [Sura 21/30].

21. *mumīt,* The Death-Bestowing   The terrestrial globe   *ṣād*   ص
The globe of dust, which is the place where the dead return and most living beings have no life (‘*aysh*) in it.

22. ‘*azīz,* The Precious, Powerful   Minerals   *ẓā’*   ظ
Those things which have great value for the normal people are found there.

23. *razzāq,* The Nourisher   Plants   *thā’*   ث
In the plants is nourishment for most animals. Through the name of The Nourisher all kinds of nourishment have been arranged and, through nourishment, everything that pertains to the

upbringing of all species. All plants are the manifestations of this very name. Of necessity, every kind of nourishment, be it sensual or spiritual, sensuous or intelligible, can be obtained from the plants—as God has also placed great power in medicinal herbs.

ذ 24. *mudhill,* The Lowering — Animals — *dhāl*
God has lowered the animals by placing them at man's disposal. Predatory animals are also among them, and these are under the spell of the name The Lowering.

ف 25. *qawī,* The Powerful, Strong — Angels — *fāʾ*
God has made the angels powerful.

ب 26. *laṭīf,* The Subtle — Djinns — *bāʾ*
The djinns are subtle bodies that are invisible.

م 27. *jāmiʿ,* The Combining — Man — *mīm*
Man is the one that unites the mysteries of the Divine Names and the realities of the created world, and is the spirit of the world.

و 28. *rafīʿ ad-darajāt,* High of Rank — The all-embracing rank — *wāw*
By "being all-embracing" it is pointed to the *ḥaqīqa muḥammadiyya,* which is higher and more elevated than the human reality.

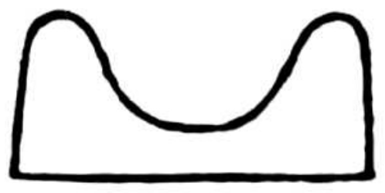
[*Translator's note:* In this chart in Urdu, which combines philosophical, gnostic, and mystical ideas, the traditional Sanskrit order of letters, beginning with the hard aspirants and ending with the labials, gives some amazing results, which fit well into the general scheme of letter mysticism. The *alif* stands, as in traditional Sufi thought and in calligraphy, for the originator; *qāf,* generally connected with the world-encircling mountain Qaf, corresponds here to the Divine Throne as described in Sura 2/256; *yāʾ,* the last letter of the Arabic alphabet, stands for the sphere of Saturn, which is the last sphere that human thought can reach and that is, astrologically, connected with the number eleven, which rank it occupies in this system. *Mīm,* usually connected with the Prophet, appears here as the letter of humanity, which corresponds to the general notion of the *mīm* in *Aḥmad,* being the letter of contingency or, as a Panjabi mystic says, "the shawl of humanity" that separates Aḥmad/Muhammad from *Aḥad,* the One God. The letter *wāw,* with its grammatical role as the conjunction "and," well expresses the position of the *ḥaqīqa muḥammadiyya* as forming the link between the Divine and created beings.]

Translated by Annemarie Schimmel

Alfred Kallir

Kallir's Sign and Design *offers a detailed explanation of the psychogenetic development of the alphabet. His initial premise—that the alphabet evolved from primordial signs present in a collective unconscious—suggests a Jungian orientation, although a related postulate (that these signs are procreative and designed to safeguard the human race) lends a Kabbalistic tone to his thesis. Specifically, Kallir traces a common iconography, obtained through a panoply of artifacts and body parts, from which the alphabet supposedly derives. Hands, noses, bending legs, houses, and chairs all contribute to Kallir's complex conjectures. The psychosexual underpinnings are obvious—the B, deriving from the mother's breasts, is a ready image of femininity—and Kallir utilizes this latency to provide a symbolic value for all the letters. A marks masculinity, the virile seed of life; B is feminine, positioned to receive the male insemination of A; C depicts the cavernous womb, with D an obviously pregnant profile; G brings together the C-shaped womb and the phallic hyphen to compose an image of copulation. Kallir, like Brisset (in "Retentions and Secretions," p. 493 below), merges sex and grammar. What follows is limited to a selection from Kallir's analysis of the letter B, itself a lengthy discussion in seventeen parts and extending to over forty pages.*

Our letter A, if in different posture, existed in very early script; in the hieroglyphs it can be identified with, inter alia, the plough. B, too, has its hieroglyphic predecessors. One of them, strange as it may seem, is probably the hieroglyph of the mountain.

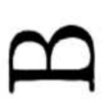
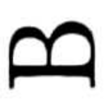


Hieroglyph: mountain.

. . .

On first sight, of course, it does not seem to make sense to link up woman and mountain, even though the *mons veneris* comes to mind. However, the earth and any part of it, be the surface even or uneven, is archetypally female. Now the common characteristic of all mountains is height. If we replace 'height' by 'Bulk' (and with mountains the one usually implies the other) we may detect it in the Persian B*urz*, Irish B*ri*, Welsh B*re*—all meaning 'high'; and the Teutonic cue-words 'Barrow', OldEnglish B*eorg*, German B*erg*—all meaning 'mountain'.

Another very common characteristic of mountains and almost all mounds is that their tops are rounded—we are told that the hills flanking the Nile, in fact show outlines like those of the hieroglyph 'mountain'. Roundness, too, typifies letter B, its convexity gaining acro-optic force in 'Bulge', cognate with German B*ügel* and B*ug* (both for 'bow'), B*ügel* being related to German *hügel*, hill (=a bow on the earth) or 'how' (in the—originally Scandinavian—sense of 'hill', and with which German B*ügel* is etymologically connected), and to 'hovel', a conical building enclosing a kiln. Skeat says that 'the older sense of high is simply rounded'. This really tells the whole story and throws light on the origin of the hieroglyphic design for 'mountain'. If we were to write 'Barrow' and *Berg*

ARROW ERG

this particular meaning of letter B would reveal its full optic impact.

A Barrow is a Burial mound—not by accident does the initial of 'Mound', 'Mount' and 'Mountain' resemble the hieroglyphic sign of the mountain—and 'burial' is another word for 'grave': the concave 'Bowl' as antithetic counterpart of the convex Barrow, Mound and Mountain. The barrow is to bury the dead, and '-bury', 'borough', '-b(o)urg', as mentioned, the recurrent part-name of many a town. The Indo-European root is BHERGH, to protect. That mountains provide protection comes linguistically to the fore, even more clearly than in 'barrow' and 'burg', in the affinity between German *berg* (mountain) and *bergen* (to protect, to shelter). The genetic shelter of the individual is the womb; and the shelter which the city offers to the aggregation of men, significantly maternal. There is a community of meanings between woman, city and mountain.

B marks, acrocratically, rounded formations, and not only of the soil. It de"sign"ates round shapes that grow underneath the soil, like the BulB, or for that matter, in and of any material: Ball, Balloon, etc. The coincidence of *b*-sounds and B-shapes (that is to say, rounded shapes) can be traced in all elements; not only in hard, also in semi-solid, liquid or gaseous formations: in Baking dough and Boiling water; by metaphor, in the Blowing wind, the Blasts of air and fire.

The Indo-European root BHEUGW, from which we have Bow and Bend, also yields 'to boil'; and boiling water causes BUBBles to rise on its surface. With Shakespeare, the verb 'to bubble' itself has still the meaning 'to rise in bubbles'. 'BLOB', 'BLEB', 'BLUBBer', Greek BL*yzō* (cf. BLister), to bubble, are of similar semantic structure.

Sound *b* and letter B can effect both auditory and visual imitation, which accounts for terms such as 'Blister' and 'Bladder' (German B*lase,* Italian B*olla,* French B*ulle*). Many onomatopoeic *b*-terms originate from live sources, animal or human. The Barking of the dog is in German B*ellen* (the related 'Bellow' marks the utterance of more powerful animals like the Bull), French *a*B*oyer,* Greek B*ayzō,* Latin B*au*B*or* (cf. the 'bow-wow' of the infant). The cry of the owl is in Latin B*u*B*ilare.* The Bleating sheep is in Greek called B*ē*B*ē,* apart from being named *probaton,* as mentioned before, a reference to its lateral locomotion.

When *b*-initialled words refer to human speech or vocal expression they often signify an inferior manner, or application, of speech: 'to blab' is 'to talk foolishly', 'tell tales', whilst 'babble' can mean as much or refer to inarticulate talk; as do French *babiller, bafouiller* and *bavarder,* and the four Greek varieties *babazō, babizō, babuzō, babrazō.* Greek *bambainō* or *battarizō,* Italian *balbettare,* French *balbutier,* all signify 'to stammer'. Moreover, in Greek, *babax* is a chatterer, and *barbaros* the foreigner, named after his incomprehensible, hence inferior language.

However, the onomatopoeic use of *b* expands, and eventually embraces words for normal and correct speech and their associations. In Sanskrit *bharh* means 'to speak'. In Greek we have *bazō,* to speak (poetic), *bagma,* speech, *baxis,* rumour, *bauzō* and *boaō,* to cry, *babai,* an exclamation of surprise, *boē* a cry—we come nearer and nearer the elementary *b*-sound from which the whole widespread nomenclature of *b*-terms fan out. The word 'fan', probably from Latin *ventus,* wind, means, and may itself have psychological connections with, 'blow'. The *b* changes into *f* in Latin *fari,* to speak, answered by 'fable', 'fame', 'fairy', 'fate'.

A significantly frequent feature in the foregoing examples is the coupling of *b*- and *l*-sounds, often joined with *a,* especially when the resulting words denote concepts of speaking. So 'blub' becomes 'blab'; and 'bubble', 'babble'. Inasmuch as these terms mark out an inferior sort of speech, including the crude attempts at talking made by the infant, we recall that the earliest vowels of the child are *a*- or *a*-like sounds. Its first consonants, we may now add, are *b* and *l.* The *l* by itself gives shape to German *lallen,* to stammer, and to 'lullaby', derived from the infant's own vocabulary, hence it is assumed understandable to it, working antithetically by sympathetic magic.

All sounds originate in natural sounds, that is in sounds of nature; they come up again and again to denote, naturally, the same concepts. Once in a while they join and crystallize *optimo modo* in this or that idiom. Language, and for that matter the whole semantic apparatus, exemplifies the relativity of all spatial and temporal concepts. In modern parlance, the collective unconscious, from which rise the sounds and signs that make up semantics, is both time- and spaceless.

So it happens that the most superb example of concentration of all those primary elements of speech which we have detected, is encountered in the Spanish word *hablar,* truly "a collector's piece". In typically acrocratic fashion it combines the first four vocal utterances of the child: the HArsh breath-sound (French HA*leine,* German HA*u*CH); the sound of soft breathing (*aleph*); vowel *a*—initial of the words for 'breath' in German (*atem*), Greek (*autmê*), Italian (*alito*); and the earliest consonants of the infant, *b* and *l*. These, at the same time, repeat and thereby strengthen what *ha* and *a* have rendered "in the first instance"—the BLowing breath. The compound *hablar,* in its completeness, attests, as it were, that breath is the primary motor of speech whence it denotes, logically enough, 'to speak'.

In concluding this Section we shall try to amalgamate its findings with the material collected earlier in reference to woman, womb and town. To accomplish this we merely need consider some familiar passages of the Bible. 'Go to, let us build a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven', said the people (Gen. xi, 4)—the tower, apparently, a then modern technical achievement (to replace the acropolis, the customary citadel on the hillside?). However, God decides: 'Go to, let us go down and there confound their language' (Gen. xi, 7). The Hebrew word for 'confound' is in this and the following instance *balal,* etymologically linked with 'Babel'. 'Therefore is the name of [the city] called Babel, because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth' (Gen. xi, 9).

The word 'bible' derives from Greek *biblos* or *byblos,* book, originally the papyrus which the Egyptians exported to Byblos. We come to notice a curious coincidence which embraces, antithetically, the two semantic spheres. Byblos, the town which, indirectly, gave its name to the Greek word for 'book' and to THE book, the Bible, is similarly named to the one where the greatest technical experiment of an early civilization was brought to naught by frustrating all linguistic intercommunication, Babel.

The name of the Great Babel is itself antithetic. It now harbours metaphorical meanings and innuendos, all related to the event narrated in Genesis, such as 'high structure', 'scene of confusion', 'wickedness associated with life in a great city'. So strong apparently is the aftereffect of the occurrence that for St. Ambros the meaning of the Hebrew letter *beth* as such becomes 'confusion'; obviously on account of the initial in the Hebrew word *balal* and its most famous application in the Scripture. Eusebius and St. Jerôme, on the other hand, explain letter *beth* simply as 'house', which has a positive genetic connotation. So letter *beth* shows up the polarity inherent in all symbols.

. . . The babbling child produces on its lips bubbles; all life has risen from the waters; the liquid, the essentially creative element, plays its part also in the creation of earliest language. Not accidentally does Hebrew *balal,* prior to reaching the sense of 'confound', mean 'to mix', 'to soften up in water', and does the "metro"polis, the Great Babel, become associated with it. The *b*-initial joins the very first concept of water with woman and mother, eventually denoting also other (male) members of the family and household—always in the infant's "vocal perspective". We give the following examples from various tongues:

'Woman', in Boeotian *bana;* Italian *balia,* and Greek *baia* for 'nurse'; 'old woman' (grandmother) in Lithuanian *babo,* in OldIrish *ben* (Webster), in Polish *baba,* Spanish *aBuela,* Latin *aVia;* and 'grandfather', correspondingly, in Spanish *aBuelo,* Latin *aVus;* 'Father', in Italian infant language, *baba* or *babbo* (corresponding to 'papa'), in Latin *pater,* German *vater.* The last examples show up the interchangeability of the labials. For 'mother' we have in Semitic languages *bath,* which also denotes her female offspring, 'daughter', and 'girl'; whilst 'son' is in Hebrew *ben,* Sumerian *banda.* The English 'boy' is in German *bube,* Latin *puer* (*puella* is 'girl'), and Sanskrit *putra.*

More or less all family relations can be covered by *b*-terms. In modern German, *base* is a female cousin, but in OldHighGerman the the aunt or any distant female relative. *Barbo* (similar to *babbo,* father) in some Italian dialects means 'uncle'. In Norwegian dialect 'brother' is *boa,* whilst the same word in OldEnglish denotes a close relative (it sounds similar to the Tyrolese *bua,* boy). As *buole,* in MiddleHighGerman, *buhle* in modern German, it assumes the sense of 'paramour'.

All these names originate in the child's language, Lewis listing as the most typical front-consonantal words spoken by children of different nationalities: *babab* for 'mother'; *baba* for 'grandmother' and 'father'; *bäbe* for 'nurse'. They are progressively arrived at, starting from the name of the child itself—'baby', Syrian *babion,* Italian *bimbo, -a* and *bambino, -a* (we note the closeness to Greek *bambaino,* to stammer). They are of course all onomatopoeic names, the primary sound naming, that is "identifying", the sound-source (i.e. the person uttering the sound) as well as the aim (person) at which it is primarily directed.

The child who refers first to its own person by *ba,* will later call its dog 'bow-wow', its cat 'miaow'. The device it uses in regard to the animals, sound-imitation, is adopted by the adults in regard to the child itself: they address the child in its own language, call it 'baby', speak in baby-talk to it, using *l*-terms, like 'lullaby', mentioned earlier.

The grown-ups, though, sometimes continue to use onomatopoeic terms introduced by the child in naming animals. Thus arise the names (Greek) *bēbē,* for 'sheep', or 'owl' (Latin *ulula,* German *eule*); and 'cuckoo' becomes internationally standardized.

The first reason why the child identifies itself by and with a sound, why it "adopts a name", is a practical one: hunger; instinctively it hopes thus to draw attention to its needs. Lewis ascertained *bap* as the infant's earliest sound, asking for FOOD—from the Indo-European root PA, to feed, and related to 'pasture' and Latin *panis,* bread. The *b*-sound plays its formative part in 'to BIte' (German B*eissen*) and 'BIt, which is originally a morsel of food, just a BIte; and in those (rather colloquial) names of small restaurants in France, Italy and Vienna: B*istro,* B*ettola,* B*eisel.* When the forceful *r* joins the elementary feeding-sound, *b,* there arise terms such as Greek BOR*a,* food of animals, our 'VOR*acious*' and 'devOUR'.

The baby's *bap* is adopted by the adult in the form of 'pap' (Italian *papa*) to name the semi-liquid mash suitable for children. Their very first aliment is entirely liquid. The Egyptian *baba,* signifying 'to sip', 'to lap', 'to drink', is rendered by *bibere, beber, boire, bere* in Latin, Spanish, French and Italian. The primary sense, though, of Egyptian *baba* is 'to moisten'—the child's lips moisten when it is hungry. It first claims, and in due course obtains, the liquid by itself producing a liquid, BUBBles of saliva—*baba* in Spanish—whilst at the same time it BABBles: two simultaneous demands for the mother's lacteous liquid, later for the pap (also an archaic word for woman's nipples). Here then we witness, in superb symballic concentration, the progressing nomenclature from the agent to the act, aim and aimed-at satisfaction—the antithetic unity of cause and purpose. From the very beginning, language is a tool; and reduplication applied early to clarify and intensify its purpose; the baby will repeat *ba, ba, ba,* until it is understood and fed.

The child "ex-presses" (Latin *ex,* out; *premo,* to press) its desire by "pressing out" of its mouth bubbles together with the ever-repeated sound *ba.* Bubbling makes the visible, babbling the audible announcement of its wants. Already at this stage, long ere any thought can be formulated by the undeveloped brain, we note the automatic and simultaneous projection of one instinct into the two (optic and acoustic) spheres of semantics. We shall call this 'bispheric projection'. It will reach the highest degree of perfection in phonetic script. The whole machinery of semantics is ready from the outset and put into operation with the first "utterance" of the child.

There is yet more to be gained from the observation of this early stage of concentrated actions. Instinctively the infant comes to apprehend that it produces liquid bubbles with profit, that in turn they yield bubbling liquid in the form of milk. The child itself experiences with pleasure the concurrence of its claims and their satisfaction.

A Greek word for 'full' is *bybos*—a reduplicative term like 'ful-fil'-(ment)—and very similar to Egyptian *baba,* Latin *bibere,* etc.; its sound-imitative origin in the act of drinking seems most likely. Moreover, Greek *byō* means 'to stuff', 'to stuff "full" of'. Hence Greek *bybos* seems first to denote the "fulfil"ment of the craving for food; for liquid food, for the feeding bubbles: the approximate homogeneity of *bubos* and 'bubble' finds thereby its explanation. *BuBos* or *ByBos* is a cue-word to the understanding of letter B. The two bows of B are, inter alia, the design of two (on pars pro toto lines, of more, that is to say, repeated) BUBBles. These are the primitive tools of the child safeguarding its life—Greek *Bios.*

. . .

The instruments for emitting and receiving liquid are the lips. Many nouns and adjectives referring to these fleshy edges of the mouth are formed by *l-* and *b-, p-* or *v*-sounds: Latin *labium,* Italian *labbra,* French *lèvre,* English 'labial' and 'lip'.

The sounds *ba, bä, be* significantly mark the opening of the mouth. In French, *béer* and *bayer* mean 'to have the mouth wide open' (from surprise, or because of an anxious desire), and the (cognate) *bâiller* means 'to yawn' (often also indicating an anxious desire, namely, for food). These sounds mark, at the same time, the outlines of the mouth, the lips, as the instruments in the process of feeding and as the intermediaries of speech. The elementary consonants of infant language, *b* and *l,* which so frequently make up terms for 'speak' on the *B-L* basis also form the consonantal structure of the above-quoted words for 'lip', though now with reversed order of the sounds, *l* preceding *b.*

. . .

Of the two sounds forming 'LIP' and 'LaBial' the (la)B(ial) is produced by the lip, whereas the tongue engenders the other one, the *l,* initial of the Latin word for 'tongue', *lingua,* and resounding in our 'language'. The dual use of 'tongue', as the name of the fleshy organ in the mouth and as synonym for 'language', proves that the tongue, among all parts of the oral apparatus, is regarded as the one chiefly engaged in forming speech; whilst the recurrent *l*-initial in terms for tongue and language proves that the *l*-iquid was experienced early as THE sound produced by the tongue. . . .

Putting two and two together, all this goes to show that lip and tongue are held to be the main instruments of language, hence as it were entitled acrocratically to denote by their characteristic sounds, *b*(*p*) and *l,* separately or jointly, their very names, lip and *lingua;* their product, 'BLAB' in all its affiliations; and also their several activities. Among these the primary one we ascertained to be feeding. We quote 'to lap' (Latin *lambo*) and the first instrument which helps feeding the child, the spoon, due to progressive assimilation *lepel* in Dutch, *löffel* in German.

. . . In the phonetic sphere of semantics, the laBial symbol often designates the whole mouth, as in French Bouche, Italian Bocca; with animals: 'Bill' and 'Beak', French Bec. We may add a Greek poetical word for 'mouth', *ekBolē,* even though its second half derives from *ballein,* to throw: it ex-"presses" the "throwing" out (*ek*) of sound by the voice. The Spanish *voz* means 'voice' as well as 'word'; it is pronounced Boz, providing circumstantial evidence for the deeper sense of *ekbolē,* and one further example of the *b*-sound used in a term that refers to speech.

From lip and mouth the B spreads to Latin B*ucca,* the Blown up, Puffed cheek; in Greek even farther afield, to B*a*B*rekes,* the gum. Another (functional and rather complicated) progression of B marks an action of the mouth like yawning—in French B*âiller,* Spanish B*ostezar,* Italian *s*B*adigliare* (complicated because yawning does not cause any *b*-sound).

. . .

We now proceed to describe one further symbolism joining the lips and sound *b.* What we have said about both, had, up to now, no sexual signification. However, the paramount craving of the infant, for food, is joined in adult life by one equally powerful, the erotic desire. And symballically heaping upon the lips still more functions, nature has allocated to them the (acrocratic) task of establishing first contact between lovers.

The words for 'kiss' are in Latin B*asium,* French B*aiser,* Italian B*acio,* Spanish B*eso,* Elizabethan English 'Buss', Austro-Bavarian (diminutive) B*usserl.* The Polish B*uzia* is a word for 'mouth' with erotic flavour, and German B*uhle,* already mentioned, means 'paramour'. The "Bursting" lips allow the first out"burst" of the *libido* (Latin for violent, chiefly sexual, desire). The phonetic correlation between 'LiP', German L*ie*B*e* and Latin L*i*B*ido,* between 'Love' and L*è*V*re,* French for 'lip', can hardly be accidental.

. . .

The hunger of the infant (desire for individual survival), man's anxiety for love (at root, the desire for the survival of the species), all reach out for the female sex; and therefore their semantic designations cluster around female symbols.

Mankind's two great urges and scourges, hunger and love, the poet likens to one another, using the former to describe both. We may quote Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis:*

'I'll be a park, and thou shalt be my deer;
Feed where thou wilt, on mountain or in dale:
  Graze on my lips, or if those hills be dry,
  Stray lower, where the pleasant fountains lie.'

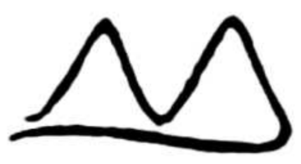
The fountains are of course the nipples of the breast. One fountain symbolizes the male sex; yet two of them together are significantly female. The etymological origin of 'Breast' is unknown; but 'Bosom', allied to Sanskrit *bhas,* to puff, to swell, can be easily brought in line with our earlier finds. In any case, both 'Bosom' and 'Breast' (Latin P*ectus*) are proto-optically denoted.

If the two bows of B mark the Bosom, the question arises: in what perspective is the bosom seen? Whilst discarding as rather absurd the bird's-eye view, we realize that man faces woman's breasts in juxtaposition when approaching her while she reclines in the performance of the sex act. Such a realistic representation, though, corresponds with the hieroglyph of the mountain rather than with upright B. It seems to add substance to our surmise regarding the inherent sexual content of the hieroglyph 'mountain'. We remind the reader of the etymological links between German *berg* (mountain) and *bergen* (cover) and the various *b*-terms with the meaning 'hill'. Shakespeare uses the simile of the hills in regard to the lips of woman ('if those hills be dry'), and many other poets, too, throughout the ages, have visualized the female breasts as hills. There is a simple link between lips, breasts, hills and mountains.

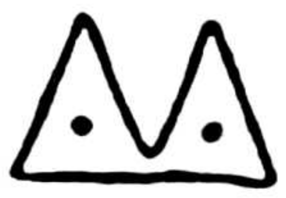
The *Oxford Dictionary* gives as yet another connotation of 'pap'—'conical hilltops side by side', which further strengthens our interpretation. 'Pap', then, the nipples, that is, are the very tops of the hilly female bosom. This evinces genetically and visually their "acrocratic" sense.

Reverting once again to 'Mountain' and 'Mouth', and considering the links with B which we have detected, we also note that the infant uses *m,* another of its earliest consonants, like *b,* to denote the milk-secreting organ (mamma); the nipples as such (mamilla); the mother (mama, mummy), extending the name of a part of, to designate thereby the whole, body or person; and the adult, as in the case of 'babe', adopts the infant's terminology when naming the 'mammals'.

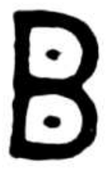
In angular style, the hieroglyphic design of the mountain appears in Minoan writing, and with dots inserted in the Vai Negro syllabary, significantly enough, for sound *pi.*



Cretan.



Vai negro *pi.*



Stungnar rûnir *b.*

Two dots also appear in the bows of the upright B of the *stungnar rûnir.* To be sure, all characters of this system are marked by dots (*stungnar rûnir* means 'dotted runes'). Still, once we accept B as the picture of woman's bosom, the dots in the runic letter are the nipples.

. . .

Our basic assumption of course remains unchanged: all sounds are as such sexually neutral. Only gradually does *b* acquire feminine sense. Yet the phonetic progression of *b* goes farther: from weak to strong, from harmlessly BABBling to Booming noises, to BOMB (cf. Greek *BomBeō*) and exPlosion. *ByBos,* full, fully grown, is a synonym for *megas,* big, great, mighty, strong, loud—physical volume being identified with sound volume: both are contained in the reduplication of *b* in *bybos.* Of course, the BOMB, like the Bell, is visually as well as phonetically marked by B; the BOMB, as befits a BOMB, both proto- and teleulogically so.

Now we are in a position to answer a question many a reader may have asked himself with raised eyebrows: Why is it that the powerful procreative Bull, despite his strong *u*-sound, should have a female initial? Sanskrit *bukk* signifies merely 'to sound'. Gradually the sound gains sexual, primarily female connotation. To mark the male bovine species Homer often adds a word, as *tauros,* to *bous.* However, the customary linguistic differentiation of the sexes is made in Greek by varying the gender: *ho bous* is the ox; *hē bous,* the cow. In languages with separate terms for the two varieties, like Italian or French, the "misleading" impression created by the female initial in the nouns for the male bovine is put right by their gender; by *il bue* and *le boeuf.*

When Booing grows and becomes intense, it can acquire male meaning by virtue of its swelling sound volume. In MiddleHighGerman, *bullen* means 'to roar', whence, eventually, the bull is interpreted as the 'bellower'. A similar psychological progression accounts for the arising of the male signification of 'bull'. The word is related to *bulin* and *bolin* to the roots *phal* and *phel:* the phallus comes back into the picture. Boisacq explains Greek *tyros,* cheese, as 'being swollen', *formé en "balle"*. We note the similarity of Greek *tyros* (*turos*) and *tauros,* bull. The Indo-European roots BUO, BUENEO, BHELGH refer to stuffing, filling up, swelling, and join with the root BHELS, to resound. So also the sense of Greek *bybos* spreads from 'great size of sound' to 'great size as such'. The swelling phallus and the swelling 'boo', the 'bellow', culminate together in 'bull'.

. . .

The legs are the Base of the Body. The origin of 'body' is unknown. We incline to interpret it as associated with 'bosom', primarily woman's body, then, as seen and named by man, offering, from various angles, Bent aspects and accordingly B-styled.

The function of the legs, prior even to moving, is that of Bearing the body; and the task of the female body, in addition, that of bearing the Burden of yet another body, that of the unborn child; eventually giving Birth to the Bairn (that is, 'the one Borne'). These consecutive meanings tend finally to establish the psychogenetic (female) correlation of 'bone' (leg), 'bosom', 'body', 'bend' and 'bear'.

The Indo-European root of 'birth' and 'bear' is BHER; in Skeat's list followed by another, identical one. That second root BHER, meaning 'to cut, bore', yields 'to bore', 'per-for-ate', Greek *pharaō,* to plough.

We do not believe that two homophonic roots can be unconnected. Put in positive language, we hold that at least "prehistorically" they must have been one.

. . .

Hence B as initial of Belly, significantly derived from the Indo-European root BHELGH, to swell, seems in its right place. The Latin for 'belly', *ventrix,* also means 'protuberance', 'a curving'; if, in view of the *v-b* affiliation, we change it to "*bentrix*" we retrieve the significant base 'Bend'. As script, too, is of man's making, we surmise that he has altogether chosen the curved symbol B in "recognition" of the female sex. The rounded shapes of the body itself as well as of some of its parts (belly, body, bottom, bosom, and breast, *bocca* or *bouche*) are to him significantly female and as such attractive. The fixation (and limitation) of sensuous affection to certain organs and limbs (fetishism) shows that the pars pro toto mechanism operates not only in semantics: it also applies to and affects the relationship between the sexes.

. . .

The mechanism behind semantics does not work in isolation; it is part of the mechanism of life. Just as the pars pro toto substitution operates in our sex life (as fetishism), so does progressive assimilation. In the exalted state of amorous emotion man's enchantment causes him to experience the perfection of his partner as spreading to her whole person; and thus she becomes the recipient of his ever-present yearning to grasp life in its totality. In particular, the aesthetical ideal which she represents to him, he widens into an ethical one.

Indeed, at the climax of her (sex-)life, woman does good to man and mankind; is *bene*-ficial; in her bounty, being bountiful, she is beautiful to man. 'Bounty' answers Latin *bonus* (adverb *bene*), good. Walde relates *benus, benlus, bonlus, bellus* to French *belle, beau;* of course to 'beauti-ful' also. Inasmuch as 'bounty', with regard to woman, is tantamount to fullness, 'bounti-ful' is, psychologically, a reduplicative concept, as is, within narrower limitations, Greek *by-bos,* full.

Mr. Billy Graham, in a broadcast, called beatitude a beautiful attitude and apologized for what he thought was a mere play on the sound of the two words. These are, in fact, etymologically connected. 'Beatitude' (happiness, that is, which also comes within the range of meanings of 'buxom') derives from Latin *beare,* to bless, allied to *bonus* and *bellus;* the latter word, by the way, signifies itself 'cheerful from good health':—we remain within the same magically contageous circle.

And now English 'bless' claims our attention, being cognate with French *blesser,* to hurt, to wound, and 'blood', the very symbol of fertility; probably also with 'blow' in the sense of 'blooming', another term rendering fertile growth. 'To bless' meant, originally, 'to consecrate'; and blood of the victim was in heathen times used at the consecration of the altar (H. Sweet, quoted by Skeat). The aim of wounding and hurting (*blesser*), of bleeding and thus by such ceremony blessing the sacrificial victim, is to obtain the divine blessing—one antithetic term joins beginning and end of the act.

. . .

'Blessed', in Hebrew, is *borukh,* and adopted into Egyptian as *bareka* signifies, moreover, 'to bend' (e.g. one's knee in homage), an act which complements the blessing and the consecration, whilst Hebrew *berekh,* on the same stem as *borukh,* blessed, signifies 'knee'. Similarly, the bending woman receives her providential blessing—through the procreative seed; and in turn, in her blessed state, will provide bliss to mankind. We found that the *B-G* base characterizes all bending (cf. German *beugen,* to bend; English 'bag', etc.); the Egyptian *bak* is another word for 'to bless'; no need to labour the point further.

The convergency of interrelated female qualities and qualifications in the terms quoted, their clustering around the initial *b*-sound, is widespread, perhaps universal. Woman is for man the earthly-human ideal; rising from the sheltering totality of her body, he is forever lured back to the womb. The sense of perfection imbuing him whilst with her, he projects on to her whole personality, on to all her faculties and characteristics:— like produces like. His love is the fire in which this conceptual totality is welded. His erotic passion integrates the visualized aesthetic and ethical perfection.

. . .

The terms for 'balance'—Latin *libra,* French *balance,* German *wage* (cognate with 'weigh')—are all of the feminine gender. Tilted into the upright position, letter B with its two equal Bows shows the perfect human projection of the Balance. The B-L in 'BaLance' recurs, inverted, in Latin L*i*B*ra.* There may be profound links between 'BaLance' and the Latin words L*i*B*ra,* L*i*B*er* (free) and L*i*B*ido* (pleasure), as well as with 'LieF' and 'Love'. The German *liebes-last,* literally, 'love-burden', is the child woman carries, the burden she bears, consequence and token of her love.

THE weight borne by woman is the heavy BaiRn— the B-R recurs also in Greek B*a*R*ys,* heavy. All weight is hard to Heave; 'weighty' means per se 'Heavy', Latin *gravis;* which brings us to Latin *gravidus,* filled, full (Greek B*y*B*os*), pregnant (in Spanish, too, *lleno* means both 'full' and 'pregnant') and closes the circle.

Woman's life consists of three stages: pregnancy is the middle stage, "balancing" between the virginal and the maternal; and letter B suitably mirrors this her climax. Woman with child Balances Both Beings, her own and that of the Bairn. She symbolizes 'equi-poise', a word as "pleonastic" as is 'equi-librium'. The second half of both words implicitly signifies 'weight' and 'weighing', and the equally balanced scales. Hence 'poise' is synonymous with 'balance'. A girl told to behave with poise undergoes, so to say, a training; she is "practising" beforehand (much as the first movements of swimming are taught on dry ground). Or is she, in hopeful anticipation, exercising sympathetic magic? Like produces like! Perhaps she is only "advertising" (all advertising works on the spring of progressive assimilation and by sympathetic magic), demonstrating to man that she possesses the requisite skill "to bear and balance", tempting him to put her to the test. All this may symballically (and of course subconsciously) guide her behaviour. 'Be-have' as such, implicitly signifying 'to behave with propriety', seems to have gained its general from an earlier limited application: the prefix 'be' stands for 'two', whilst 'to have', 'to possess', necessarily means to have and possess something weighty, thereby "carry weight", be oneself of weight, heavy. Thus 'BeHave' equals 'Be Heavy'—so to say, hopefully anticipating things to come.

This is the most extraordinary word in the primitive Language; it expresses the moon's first crescent and a number of ideas connected with it. The most striking are *espérer* [to hope] and *tromper* [to deceive]; so that the name of the crescent, in a great many languages (which linguists do not assign to the same family), signifies on the moral plane *cunning* and *deception* (Fr. *tromperie* [cf. Eng. *trumpery*]), and on the physical plane *serpent.* Curved instruments bear the name of the crescent moon, i.e. the various names of the serpent. For example:

Italian **Serpè,** Fr. *serpent, serpe* [billhook], *croissant* [crescent]; Mod. Greek **drepani,** to be read as **srépani,** Fr. *faucille* [sickle]; English **sherp** [sic: *sharp,* 'to cheat'], Fr. *tromper.* In French, the words *trompe* [elephant's trunk] and *trompette* [trumpet] are real serpents, like the musical instrument *serpent.*

Our French terms *faux* [scythe], *faucille* [sickle], from Latin **falx** correspond to our words *fallacieux* [fallacious] and *faux* [false], cf. *trompeur.*

The god **Hermes** is the crescent, for **her mes** in Hebrew means sickle; take the word apart, and you will find **heri (ari)** plus **mes** 'crescent', 'lunar knife', and *month*—the French word *mois,* which should be pronounced **mese** as in Italian; **messis** is 'what is cut' in Latin countries: *la moisson* [harvest] in French. **Mes** is universally the crescent moon, the prototype and primitive image of all curved instruments, weapons, etc. forged by the hand of man.

It is well known that the word **Guivre** means 'serpent'. It is composed of **gui,** 'serpent', and of **vere,** 'shining crescent', which is no more than an affix here, for **gui** on its own means 'serpent'; in Latin, **anguis** is 'serpent', 'eel' (Fr. *anguille*).

The French word *tromper* would have remained a mystery forever, like so many others, had it not been for the discovery of the fundamental laws of language; **tor,** Fr. *tordre* [to twist], **tor-ompa,** Fr. *hampe* [shaft, staff], **ompa, ampa,** mean 'agent' in Malagasy. The Nordic **Tor** is none other than the curved crescent moon, the symbol of something active; it is the suffix used by Europeans to form their active nouns, whereas the Madagascans put **ompe** at the beginning of the word; these two signs denoting action are united in **tr-ompe,** which means 'twice curved', for in the physical sense *trompe* means **syphon,** syphon equals **typhoon,** which is itself a serpent, that is a curved being or object. Thus *trompe* is a name for the crescent moon, and, in the moral sense, it means 'trickery', like all the names for the crescent or serpent of the moon.

The terror inspired in men at all times by the serpent is a natural effect which has nothing in common with the universal idea of hope, of deception (*tromperie*), of cunning—the radically opposite meanings of the word *serpent.*

It becomes clear at this point that what is involved in the composition of these words is simply the lunar serpent, the crescent, and not the terrestrial animal.

Sin means the Moon in the form of a waxing crescent, cf. the French word *ceinture* [binding, belt], **cinetura.**

Sinus, in Latin, means 'curve'; the French terms *insinuer, s'insinuer* [to insinuate (oneself)] are very close to *tromper* [deceive]; *sinaï,* in Malagasy, means 'cunning', 'deception'. The Latin word **bu-cinna** signifies 'trumpet' (Fr. *trompette*) in its physical meaning; **buccina** is also the rising of the new Moon, the crescent.

Our French term *doloire* [adze], **dola-bera,** is related in meaning to *serpe* [billhook]; the Greek term **doleros,** 'deception', 'cheating' (cf. French: '*tromperie*'), and **dolos,** Latin **dolus,** give the French *dol* 'fraud'.

We have just explained the pernicious influence of the crescent; its opposite influence yields the same words with a totally contrasting meaning.

The crescent, or lunar serpent, is a sign of good and evil; the art of determining from its appearance what was about to happen in the way of fortune or misfortune was the first superstition into which, according to our most ancient Scriptures, woman was drawn by her curiosity. All words are marked by the idea of the *deceiving* crescent or the *beneficial* crescent.

Translated by Catherine Slater

Victor Hugo

A Hieroglyphic Alphabet

Have you noticed how the Y is a picturesque letter with countless significations?

The tree is a Y; two roads branching is a Y; the meeting of two rivers is a Y; the head of a donkey or an ox is a Y; a glass on its base is a Y; a lily on its stem is a Y; a supplicant raising his arms toward the sky is a Y.

This observation can be extended to all the constituent elements of the human writing system. Everything in demotic language is poured into it from a hieratic language. The hieroglyph is the necessary root of the written character. Originally, all letters were signs, and all signs were originally letters. Human society, the world, all of mankind exists within the alphabet. Freemasonry, astronomy, philosophy, all the sciences take it as their indiscernible but genuine point of departure; and this is as it should be. The alphabet is a fountainhead. A is a roof, a gable with its crosspiece, the arch, *arx;* or is it the *accolade* of two friends who kiss each other on the cheeks and shake hands. D is the back; B is D upon D, a back on a back, the hump; C is a crescent, the moon; E is a solid foundation, the right foot, a console and a sternpost [étrave], the entire architecture of the basement in a single letter; F is the gallows, a pitchfork, Furca; G is a horn; H is the facade of a building with its two towers; I is a war machine hurling a projectile; J is the plowshare and cornucopia; K is the angle of reflection equal to the angle of incidence, one of the keys of geometry; L is the leg and foot; M is a mountain, or a camp with conjoined tents; N is a closed door with its diagonal bar; O is the sun; P is a porter, standing with his load on his back; Q is a rump with a tail; R is repose, the porter leaning on his staff; S is a serpent; T is a hammer; U is an urn; V is a vase (which is why we confuse them so often); I have already spoken of Y; X is crossed swords, a fight—who will be the victor? we do not know; hence, the hermetics took X for the sign of fate, the algebraists took it for the sign of the unknown; Z is a lightning flash, it is God.

Thus, first there is man's house and architecture, then man's body, both its structure and deformities; next justice, music, the church; war, harvest, geometry; mountains; the nomadic life, the life enclosed; astronomy; work and rest; the horse and the serpent; the hammer and the urn, which can be inverted and joined to make the bell; trees, rivers, paths; finally, fate and God: there you have the contents of the alphabet.

For some of those mysterious constructors of language who built the foundations of human memory, and whom memory forgets, it could be that the A, E, F, H, I, K, L, M, N, T, V, Y, X, and Z were none other than the various ribs of a temple's framework.

Translated by Steve McCaffery

Benjamin Paul Blood

Benjamin Blood (1832–1919)—farmer, inventor, pugilist, journalist, poet, and philosopher—lived in Amsterdam, New York, carrying on a wide correspondence with such luminaries as Grover Cleveland, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Cullen Bryant, Alfred Lord Tennyson, and William James. James was deeply beholden to Blood, and his final publication was a tribute, "A Pluralistic Mystic" (1910), in which he reaffirmed Blood's view that "philosophy must pass from words, that reproduce but ancient elements, to life itself, that gives the integrally new." James's interest was initially aroused by The Anaesthetic Revelation *(1874), in which Blood proposed to dispell the trance of philosophical monism by recourse to nitrous oxide. James—"loaded to the muzzle with chloroform in the hope of expressing the anaesthetic revelation" (observed Blood)—discovered that language disintegrated under the weight of so much clarity; and the closest he could come to articulating the event was: "There are no differences but differences of degree between different degrees of difference and no difference."*

The Poetical Alphabet

A jury of common-sense men might well be excused for a verdict, over their book oaths, that there is no important sense in what follows here; but . . . Common-sense men as such are not philosophers, and they are not concerned with the fact that logical truth is held to the arbitrament of language, the production and determination of which are therefore of prime importance in philosophical explanation.

It was on a June morning in 1854 that I entered the publishing house of James Munroe and Company of Boston (and Cambridge) with a manuscript which soon evoked a discussion as to why the word *icicle* was not a fit name for a tub. . . .

Something in the natural sound of the spoken words was the first relevant suggestion; when you set down a tub it responds to that name. The shapes of the two things are also responsive: the tub is short and stubby, while the icicle is spindling and slim.

. . . To illustrate this, consider the use of the words *entrails, reins, bowels*—all good in scientific and social discourse, but for some unmentionable reason classic culture draws the line at *guts!*

"Well, what is the trouble with guts?"

I expounded here that they were vulgarized by the absurd genius of u flat.

"*U,* guttural, or flat, is a humorous savage, best described in his own words: a huge, lubberly, blundering dunderhead, a blubbering numskull and a dunce, ugly, sullen, dull, clumsy, rugged, gullible, glum, dumpish, lugubrious—a stumbler, mumbler, bungler, grumbler, jumbler—a grunter, thumper, tumbler, stunner—a drudge, a trudge; he lugs, tugs, sucks, juggles, and is up to all manner of bulls—a musty, fussy, crusty, disgusting brute, whose head is his mug, his nose is a snub, or a pug, his ears are lugs, his breasts dugs, his bowels guts, his victuals grub, his garments duds, his hat a plug, his child a cub, his dearest diminutive is chub or bub or runt; at his best he is bluff, gruff, blunt; his doublet is of sturdy buff and though not sword, is 'cudgel proof'; budge he will not, but will drub you with a club, or a slug, nub, stub, butt, or rub you with mud—for he is ever in a muss or a fuss—and should you call him a grudging curmudgeon he gulps up "ugh, fudge, stuff, rubbish, humbug" in high dudgeon; he is a rough, a blood-tub, a bummer, and a "tough cuss" all around; he has some humor, more crudity, but no delicacy; of all nationalities you would take him for a Dutchman."

It is rather remarkable, in so far as the muscular effort of utterance might be relevant, that the continuous or long *u* serves for the very opposite effect, as we see it in the *true,* the *pure,* the *sure,* the *beautiful,* the *gude.* "True blue" is a proverb of the highest worth.

As for the Dutchman above, it may be recalled that formerly we had a religious association called the Dutch Reformed Church. For a long and struggling time its sturdy independence clung stoutly to the name Dutch, but with assured prosperity came a more amenable style, and the Dutch prefix was omitted from what is now called the Reformed Church.

Yet it was not wholly the *u* flat in Dutch that disqualified it for devotional suggestion, but the *tch* was exceptionable; *itch, bitch, pitch,* all defile; but when the bard of natural history congratulates himself that

> The gray bitch holds to the death,

we realize a manly poetry which the tea-table would resent.

All the reading of my serious years has been attended by this side consideration: that each of the sounds represented by the several letters of the alphabet is specially effective in conveying a certain significance; and wherever language is popular and happy it is so in accordance with these early intuitions. That I was not singular in this sensitiveness I was assured by hints dropped by Swedenborg and the poet Burns; but I had not as yet chanced upon the "Kratylus" of Plato when I anonymously issued a characterization of the meanings of all the alphabetic sounds. . . . But when it truly appears that as a youth of inconsiderable reading I in English unknowingly concurred with Plato in Greek, in the interpretation of the sounds of a half dozen of the letters, the fact has philological value as an unprejudiced approval of Plato's observation. For my own part I can cheerfully forego the originality for the comfort of the coincidence.

. . .

I give here my alphabet as at first printed, with a few merely abstract sketches taken from my quite elaborate essay—little known and long forgotten. The reader shall judge whether or not it deserved its fate.

MAN'S NATURAL ALPHABET

ā: vastness, space, plane.
ă: flatness.
b: brawn, bulk, initial force.
c: soft, as s; hard, as k.
ch, tch: a disgusting consistency.
d: (initial) determination, violence.
d: (final) solidity, end.
e: convergence, intensity, concentration.
$\left.\begin{array}{l}\text{h:}\\ \text{t:}\end{array}\right\}$ ethereality, fineness of fibre.
g: (hard) hardness.
gl: hardness and polish.
gr: hardness and roughness, grit, grain.
ĭ: thinness, slimness, fineness.

ī: inclining directions.
k: fineness of light and sound.
l: polish, chill, liquidity.
m: monotony.
n: negation, contempt.
o: volume, solemnity, nobility.
p: volume without fibre, pulp.
q: queer, questionable.
r: roughness, vibration.
s: moisture.
sh: wet confusion.
u: crudity, absurdity.
v, w, y: vehemence, general emphasis.
z: haze, dry confusion.
au: vaulting, curving upward.
ou: roundness, downward.
oi: coil—external.
ei: coil—internal.
ia: downward and away—flourish.

As the compositor locates his types before him in his case for his own convenience rather than as following the conventional order of the alphabet, so we must treat firstly the five vowels, on which all the other letters expend their force.

ā—"Far, far away, over the calm and mantling wave"—so begins the boy's first romance—the poetry of the ocean, of vastness, space, plane. The word *ocean,* is used only for rolling and dashing effects; the *wave, the main, vast waters, watery waste, or plain,* are the poetical synonyms of ocean. *Lake, vale, straight, chase, race, trail, trace, away,* give distance and plane. Near at hand, long *a* gives effect to *slate, scale, flake, plate, cake,* etc. *Waver, shake, quake,* show horizontal vibration.

ă.—The flat *a* shows its effect in *mat, pack, strap, slap, platter, flap, pat, flat, clap,* etc.; *dash, splash, thrash,* give flat and lowdown effects. A stone much broken, yet retaining its bulk, is said to be *crushed,* but if its form is borne down it is *mashed, smashed,* etc. Burns, in his poem, "The Vowels," calls *a* "a grave, broad, solemn wight"; this character belongs to *a* only as in *ah,* or *o* flat.

e.—Swedenborg said that the angels who love most use much the sound of *o,* while the more intellectual and penetrating use more the sound of *e.* Burns's notion of *e* was that of intense grief, as in "*greeting*" (that is, in Scotch, weeping). The general use of *e* is for concentration and convergence, or intensity, the bringing of thought to a focus. All the pet names and endearing diminutives end in *e*—the *wee* things—the *lee-tle, tee-ny* things. The child dwells on the *e* in *pe'-ep,* or *pe'-ek,* and in *me'-an, ke'-an, sne'-aking, etc.* Not so the baby when he gives you his rattle-box; he opens his mouth and his heart with the instinct of the dative case, and says "tah!"—outward and away. So when he gets the wrong thing in his mouth his mother cries "*Ka!* spit it out"; whence possibly, the Greek *kakos*—bad, as applied to things. The introspective Hamlet says, "making night hideous and *we* fools of nature," instead of *us,* the objective case. *Zeal, squeal, screech*—to *be,* to *see,* to *feel,* are strong by the use of *e.*

ĭ—I, short, as in *pin,* has a *stiff, prim, thin, slim, spindling effect,* as of the "bristling pines"; or when "Swift Camilla" "skims along the main." It has a thinning, perpendicularly attenuating effect. A "light skiff" is well mentioned; and a "thin whiff."

O hark, O hear, how thin and clear!

Short *i* has a very lightening effect in sounds: as in *tinkle, clink, link*—thin metallic sounds of a perpendicular vibration. But flat, or horizontal vibration uses *ă,* as in *clank*—as of a sheet of zinc slapping the floor; how different from the *clang* of a bar of steel! *Tin* is a good word for that metal in the thin shape most commonly known; but in the native bulk and volume we call it *block.*

ī—Long *i* gives inclination. "The clouds *consign* their treasures to the field." "In winter when the dismal rain comes down in slanting *lines.*" *I* long and *a* give a poetical curve, downward and away:

"Once in the flight of ages past."
"Many an hour I've whiled away."
"Swilled by the wild and wasteful ocean."
"Some happier island in the watery waste."
"O when shall it dawn on the night of the grave?"
"Athens, and Tyre, and Balbec, and the waste
Where stood Jerusalem."
"O, wild enchanting horn."

o.—Plato seems to have done miserable injustice in characterizing for simple roundness the vowel *o*—the noblest Roman, or Greek either, of them all. Roundness is well enough—although roundness proper is represented by *ou* diphthong—but roundness is merely the key to *volume, solemnity, nobility,* and *wonder.* Read this most solemn sentence in all literature, and see at once the more serious meaning of *o:*

For man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets.

Not all the trappings and the suits of woe can so pall the sunlight in the homes of men as does the fit reading of this sombre verse. Burns's idea of *o* was expressed in "the wailing minstrel of despairing woe." Swedenborg's insight was rather one of adoration or devotion. But these comparatively incidental expressions give way before the philological art of more modern writers. All things *noble, holy, adorable,* or *sombre, slow, sober, dolorous, mournful, devotional,* or *old, lone, sole, glorious,* or even *bold, portly, pompous,* find their best expression in the *o* sound. *Jehovah, Jove, Lord God,* exalt the soul. *O, ho, lo,* are exclamations which nations use with little variance.

"O Rome, my country, city of the soul,
The orphans of the heart must turn to thee."
"O sad Nomore, O sweet Nomore."
"Roll on, thou deep and dark-blue ocean, roll."
"Their shots along the deep slowly boom."
"The lowing herds wind slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way."

Most people think of a *boulder* as a big, bulky stone; the dictionaries use the word for a *class* of stones of which one need not be greater than a pea. The *o* gives the volume, and the initial *b* gives the bulk and brawn—which make a favorite dictionary so popular as the "*unaBridged.*" Yet in *pebble,* which is one third made up of *b,* we get no bulk at all, owing to *e* and *p.*

u.—Burns had some notion of the effect of *u;* he speaks of it as "grim, deformed, with horrors entering"; but obviously this was only a careless glance of that great genius, who probably had never thought of the character before, and who possibly never thought of it again. But we have had enough of *u.*

Of the diphthongs, *au* seems to me effective in *vault* (to leap or swing), *flaunt, toss* (taus), *saunter, jaunt, haughty, walk, halting,* and the like. *Ou* is the curve of *roundness,* as in *bough, bow down, crown, around, mound, bound* (tied around). "Down the shouldering billows borne." *Oi* strikes me forcibly in *coil. Iou* is a favorite curve with the poets.

"And false the light on glory's plume."
"The wide old wood resounded to her song."
"Of love's, and night's, and ocean's solitude."

But the vowels are weak and delicate when compared with the consonants, which give to language its fibre and its nerve.

b.—As a special intensity, *b* represents the disposition to swell out the cheeks and utter an exaggerating and sometimes contemptuous explosion, such as *boo! bah! bosh! bully! bravo!* etc. *B* gives volume in a crude and semi-humorous mode. Thus *brawny, brusque, blunt, burly, bulky, big, bully, brazen,* besides carrying a certain direct and proper meaning, reject all refinement in favor of a humorous *brag, burlesque,* and exaggeration of the *Brobdignagian,* "unabridged" order. It is especially strong in connection with *u* short—a regular *"buster,"* a *"big bug," bugbear, Bluebeard,* and *bugaboo—a bombastic, brazen buck* and *blower.*

c.—This letter is only *s* and *k* as convertible, and has little individuality; that little is a kind of slipperiness; *ch* and *tch* are used for absurdity as bordering on disgust. This in *itch, bitch, botch, kutch, scotch* (to haggle or wound), *smutch, smirch, screech,* etc., a class of words avoided by refined society, because their humor is offensive.

d.—Plato used *d* and *t* alike for determination or binding at an end. We see the effect of *d* immediately in *wad, sod, clod, load, rugged, leaden, dead.* The short report of a heavily loaded pistol is well caught in the word *explode.*

"Earth's cities had no sound nor tread,
And ships were drifting with the dead
To shores where all was dumb."

As initial, or beginning a word, *d* shows a resolved or violent disposition, as if the teeth were set: thus in *damn, dare, do, dig, drive, dogged,* etc. The metal *lead* is well named; so are iron, tin, and silver. What little effect *t* has, as apart from *h,* is certainly similar to that of *d,* as Plato averred.

f, h, t, and *th.*—These are the ethereal, softening letters, whose fibre is the most fine and attenuated, as of breath without resonance. Thus in *smooth, soothe, breathe, feathery, Lethean, muffled, smothered, far, faint, forgetful, Sabbath, suffocate, froth, stuff, muff, whiff,* etc.

"The effusive South

Warms the wide air, and o'er the vault of heaven Breathes *the big clouds, with vernal showers distent. At first a dusky* wreath *they seem to rise, Scarce staining* ether."

"Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls
Her watery labyrinth."

g, l, and *r.*—These are the giant consonants, expressive of unquestionable and unequivocal power. There is no humor, chaff, or nonsense about them, and "baby talk" excludes them. Each has a distinct force, which yet is most effective in union with one of the others. *G* is the hard letter, *r* is the rough and vibratory letter, and *l* is the chilling and polishing letter. Thus *gr* gives the hard roughness to *grit, grate, grind, grained, gravel, grim, grudge, growl, groan, grunt,* etc., while *gl* is effective in *glass, glary, glide,* etc. *R* by itself is strong in *bur, mar, blur, scar, rude, roar, rush, writhe, scour, crisp, fry, fritter, fragment, broken, gnarled, burly, torrent,* etc., etc.

"The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent
roar."
"The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls."

"The crisped brooks," says Milton, and a hundred poets after him.

Though the ocean's inmost heart be pure,
Yet the salt fringe that daily licks the shore
Is gross with sand.

Foreknowing that *s* is the wet or moist letter, note how the brackish wash, the grit of the sand in the brine, is rendered in the word *gross* above. Tennyson, also, has a quick expression of this briny wash, where the sail-boat is said to "cut the shrill salt," etc. But how dry and deep-carved is the figure following, of a sleeping poet:

Dropt in my path like a great cup of gold,
All rich and rough with stories of the gods.

L, by itself, makes all clear, lucid, placid, liquid; it is the polish of *glow, gleam, glide, glassy, glance, glitter,* etc. The *l* lends the cold, metallic quality to the solidity of *lead;* it gives lustre and ring to silver, as the *r* roughens and darkens *iron.* "Hear the sledges with their bells." For the little bells we have "the tintinnabulation that so musically swells."

k.—*K* must be taken into all account of fine sounds and lights, usually with *i* and *a;* thus in *twinkle, tinkle, flicker, sparkle, crackle, link, chink, trickle;* so in fibrous attenuations: *nick, splick* (the quarryman's name for a chip of stone), *skin, skiff, skip, skim, skive, sketch.*

. . .

m.—This is the letter of dreamy murmur and monotony; *hum, rumble, moan* are onomatopoetic. *Memory* is the poet's dearest word.

n.—All nations agree in saying *no.* There is hardly a language in the world in which *n* is not the chief element of negation. Plato makes *n* the sign of *inwardness* (as translated); intensity of withdrawal were better. It is a nasal sound, which is intensified by drawing up the muscles of contempt at the sides of the nose—as when we dwell upon *mean, sneaking, n-asty.*

p.—This letter shows the character I have given it in such words as *plump, lump, pulp, voluptuous, sleep, dump, ripe, lip, purple.*

q.—*Queer, questionable, quaint, quizzical, quip, quirk, quiddity, quillet, squeak, squeal, squint, squeamish, squelch, qualm, quit, quash,* etc. show *q* as the organ of the whimsical and *outré*—the very opposite of *o.*

s.—*Moist, misty, nasty, sticky, steam, slop, slip, slush, dash, swash, drizzle,* all suggest water in its different stages; even *ice* is kept wet by the *c.* Lus*cious, delicious, nutri(c)ious,* suggest juicy substances.

sh, either initial or final, suggests moist confusion; thus, initially we have *shiver, shatter, shake, shrivel, shrink, shred;* finally, we have *dash, clash, lash, thrash, swash, smash, trash, rush, gush, mush, slush,* etc.

——"the sun new risen
Looks through the horizontal misty air
Shorn of his beams."
"The stars obtuse emit a shivered ray."

v.—Perhaps one tenth of the words which begin with *v* have an element of vehemence: *vim, violence, victory, vanquish, velocity, vigor, vice, vengeance, villainy.*

W and *y* also have general emphasis.

z.—This is a dreamy letter, of *hazy, mazy,* dry confusion; a *lazy, drowsy, dozing, furzy, dizzy, vi(z)ionary* atmosphere attends it, in which the genius of Thomson delighted.

A pleazing land of drowzyhead it waz.

There was a question as to a certain Turk: Did he wear the fez?

O. Henry answered: "No, he was clean shaved."

Herman Damen

Towards a Three-Dimensional Pouitry

1.1. in order to become a symbol, visible (and tangible), independent of time (and to a certain extent also of place), sound and notion (or object) need material; i.e., either the underlying material or the writing- or drawing-material. And in order to become a figure-symbol, they need a contrasting ground (light or dark).

1.2. in the traditional conception and in the traditional use, phonogram (letter) and ideogram are two-dimensional: they "are" a flat, a form of the material (graphite, ink, underlying matter, etc.); their length and width are defined—with a certain freedom of variation—by agreement. depth, the third dimension is of no importance: only visibility matters, a visible means of communication (to produce and to read efficiently). the operative printing types are ordered horizontally and are characterized by repetition of the form.

1.3. *verbal plasticism wants to consider letter and ideogram not only as one side of the matter, but also wants to see (consider) and feel them as material, as a concrete three-dimensional symbol, not only visible but also tangible.*
it prefers to press sound and notion out of the matter more than to express them in matter.

1.4. the incised letter, e.g., exists by the grace of the absence of the underlying material as matter. the pencil makes a certain notch in the material, but more than fills it with graphite. chisel, nail, finger, etc., produce language, in stone or sand, by knocking off or pushing away these matters. through the light-dark contrast the letter becomes visible. this letter is not only to be considered as two-dimensional, but also as three-dimensional matter. just like the completely cut out letter, it consists of air; the concrete tangibility is very little.
remark: the air can also form the "background": viz., when writing in the air. this distinguishes itself furthermore by a restraint of place and time: the visibility has a minimum duration (for it is momentary), while there is no tangibility (evaporation). this form of communication has a special didactic function.

1.5. taking the criterion of the tangibility of the letter into consideration, i can distinguish: small letter – big letter; line letter – flat letter (open or filled up); shadow letter – letter-with-shadow (suggestion of independent depth letter); monoletter – stereoletter; monochrome letter – letter with graphic accentuation of three-dimensionalness (light-shadow effect within the letter); letter that is necessarily fixed to the underlying material (e.g., the deepened or cut out air letter or the relief letter)—independent depth letter, only in its visibility tied to the contrast of the background.

2. the striving for a bigger/better concreteness of letter and ideogram realizes itself in two ways: graphical and plastical.

2.1. *graphical:* one can distinguish:
a. pouims ("ideograms") with an appropriate form, color or matter, on neutral underlying material (paper): the (sometimes) deformed letters fit into the outer form, for instance, the (section-) contour of a concrete part of the be-symbol-ed; the content is already partially referred to in the ideographic form (figurgedicht, technopaegnia).
b. pouims which have or have not an appropriate form, color, or matter, with a functional underlying material (also according to form, color, or matter): the underlying material starts to participate with content and form of the text; i.e., plays, if possible, a greater part than only its primary function of contrast.
remark: as for the underlying-material-letter this function of contrast is realized by a contrasting matter round the letter. for this letter, however, it is necessary that the surface is smaller than the surface of the underlying material.

2.2. *plastical:*
now we enter the field of the concrete pouims (tangible and visible matters), of the word-object or the letter-plastic. the letters and ideograms consist of a natural or artificial material; are (pre)fabricated or discovered.

2.3 the question is whether with the above-mentioned pouims the—from my point of view—"one sided view of the letter" is done away with. with most letters of the roman alphabet the back side of a letter-structure is not the same as the appointed understandable front side (only A – H – I – M – O – T – U – V – W – X – Y have no reverse at the back side). starting from the surface-letter—i.e., the conventional two-dimensional form—i want to *create such an alphabet that as many as possible points of view and touch will be considered to be of equal value.* the mobility of the participant (looker-on/feeler-for) has to be stimulated.

3. *a first step:* creating an alphabet of letter-objects, the back side of which has the same form as the front side.

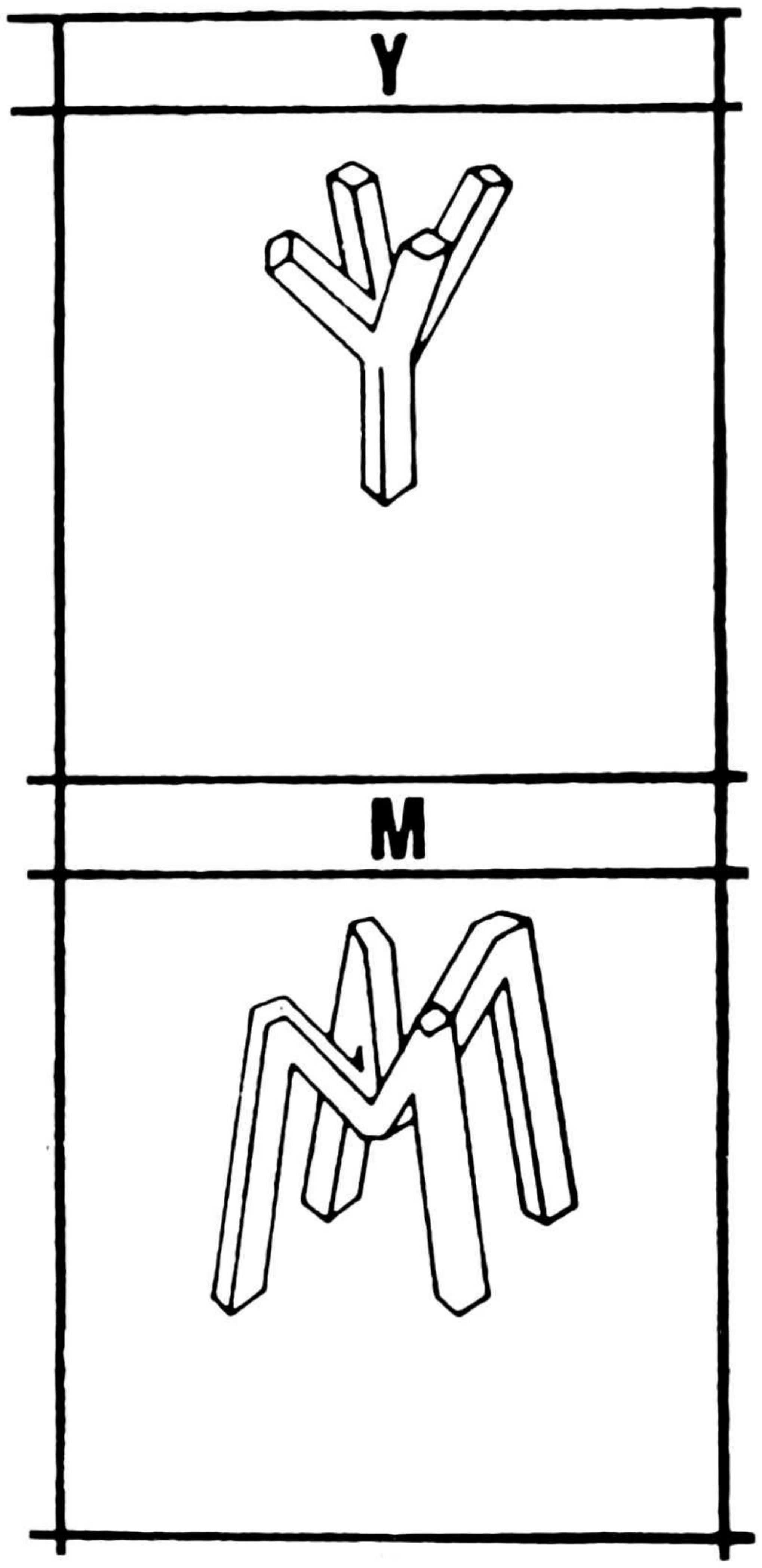
3.1. the possibilities are: an overlapping or an over-lapping connection of the traditional symbol with its reverse (before or behind it) or a turning of the letter from a standing to a lying position.

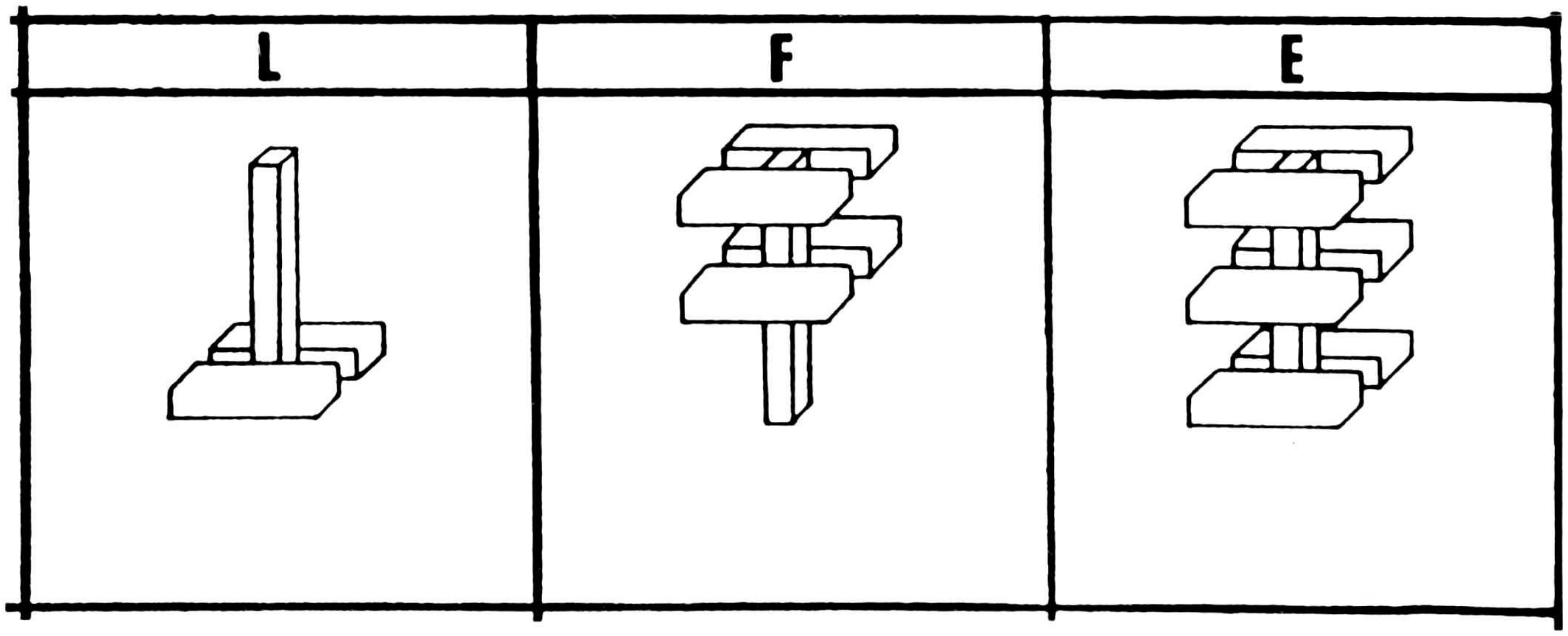
3.2. the letter can become so thick that when looking from the side, one cannot see either the front or the back side; therefore:

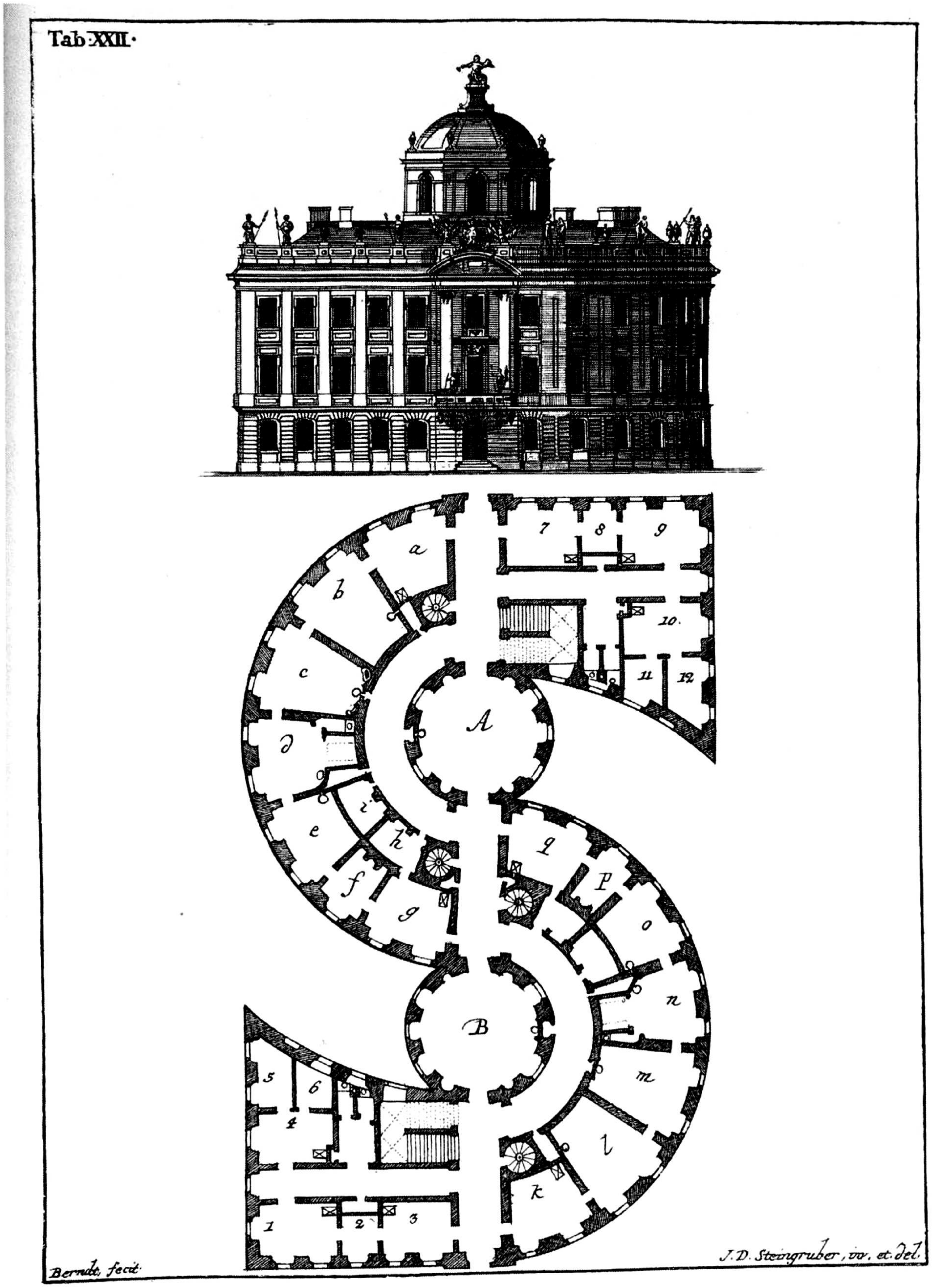
4. *a second step:* the creation of an alphabet of letter-objects where front- and side-view have the same effect.

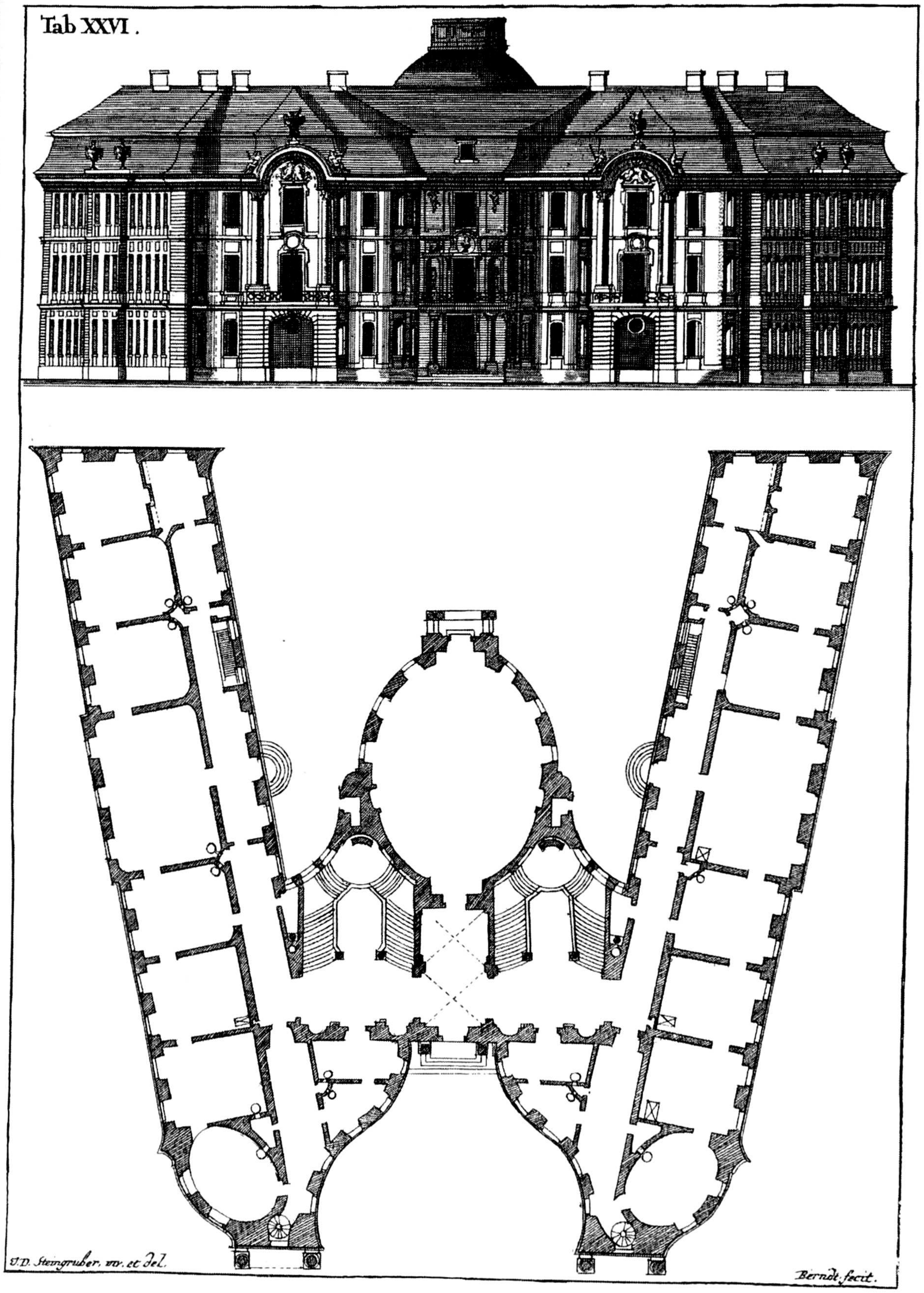
4.1. the upper side and to a less extent the bottom side allow and need a panoramic view from different positions.

4.2. transparent colored or not colored material helps to discover the traditional letterform when looking at the letter-structure from above or from below (although the length and width of this form will not always be the same), without an otherwise necessary multiplication of symbol and its reverse.






Tab. XXII.
a
b
c
d
e
f
g
h
i
A
B
7
8
9
10
11
12
q
p
o
n
m
l
k
5
6
4
1
2
3
Berndt, fecit.
J. D. Steingruber, inv. et del.


Tab XXVI.
J.D. Steingruber. inv. et del.
Berndt fecit.

Johann David Steingruber

bp Nichol

An admitted influence on Canadian poet Nichol (1944–1988) is Alfred Jarry's science of imaginary solutions, 'pataphysics, "the science of that which is superinduced upon metaphysics, whether within or beyond the latter's limitations, extending as far beyond metaphysics as the latter extends beyond physics." It is conceived as the science of the particular, examining the laws governing exceptions rather than the rule. Nichol was instrumental in formulating a concept of Canadian "Pataphysics (sic—the augmentation of Jarry's apostrophe to the double-quote may be taken as Nichol's clinamen*), and was a founding member of its college.*

Probable Systems 14: Re-discovery of the 22 Letter Alphabet: An Archaeological Report

what follows grows out of probable systems 11 out of W the ear hears the UU connection we could read the ending of the alphabet then UVUUXYZ thus the question becomes why the double u is it necessary

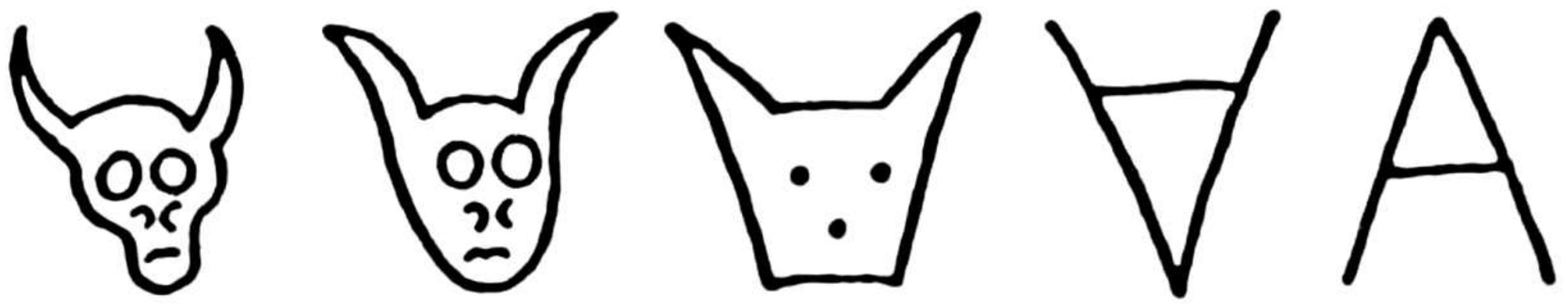
connect back to *aitch* (H) the other letter whose name falls outside the normal pattern of alphabetic naming what seems obvious is that both letters are palindromes AHIMOTUVWX & sometimes Y (possible connection to the real vowels of the language?) are all palindromes in French W pronounces as double V X is also double v X as a human sign balances it has the head & the genitals W brings everything up into the head it doubles the head's power by sacrificing the genitals

O is more than a palindrome it reads the same from any positioning a 25 letter alphabet allows one to return O to a centrality between m & n

M & N here the upper case conceals m + n contain a counter aspect and aspect of compression 2 into 1 it seems possible that n could have preceded m following the 1 to 2 numerical progression emphasis on the 2 (m being placed first) reinforces the W preceding X (head dominated) dictum

M is the mirror image of W narcissus the head falls in love with the head W is an acting out of the narcissistic fantasy thus

X is closer to O than any other letter both are more than palindromic they are conjoined things & not split T functions as a truncated I & thus the lower case t Christ's crucified on (cf. i the ascendancy of the dot from the confining line into infinite space) A V connect A arising out of the OX's head note the OX connection making the A V connection clear



vis-à-vis Alfred Kallir

here the line in A actually functions as the head's top thus in V the mind is blown the top lifted the soul drifts free into the cosmos

V W X falsely places western intellectualization (the W as dominant head control) ahead of the X (marks the spot the buried treasure that which is under i.e. genital)

U V X Y Z

thus a 23 letter alphabet records a progression from earth bound A to cosmos bound V leading into ultimate freedom & connected being X (the unknown factor) it is Y Z makes X unknown they are perhaps later historically a later unlearning of the A to X tradition because X is so obviously a terminal point (marks the spot where the digging should begin the connected self) Y Z prevents the true functioning of X

palindromic letters mark key points necessary for the understanding the alphabet (alpha's bet A's gamble cf. PILGRIM'S PROGRESS etc.) H & I have the most perfect relationship being palindromic, mirror reversible & reflective as well as lying next to each other in the alphabet one rotates into the other aitch is I's magic name thus to know aitch is to control I the knowledge of I (self) is impossible without the knowledge of H (I's real name) in the 23 letter alphabet the I to N passage makes plain what the I to M passage in the 26 character one confuses in the former m becomes the spiritual twinning of the self presaging the X conclusion in the latter M becomes the western intellectualization of the (earlier) eastern experience

note that the secret doctrine of M & N exists in the lower case it is placement determines misconception here M W reads as one of the most powerful palindromic mirror-reflective units in the alphabet if its secret doctrine is understood French gives us a clue W is double V thus the X connective & the realization of W for what it is if however M is understood as m & W as uu the connective doctrine emerges from the 23 letter alphabet because n & u's mirror-reversed & reflected image thus A's gamble pays off in the movement from n thru o to m then on into t (as we've seen) u v x thus the restoration of the real alphabet (the realphabet) becomes central to 20th century concerns of death reversal

A B C D E F G H I J K L N O M P Q R S T U V X

here it is necessary to go into the b p q d relation which emerges in the lower case secret doctrine note that p q lie next to one another in the alphabet thus repeating the H I phenomenon echoing as it does the b d relationship (it is its mirror-reflective image) it reveals in cluster a zygal configuration

bd
pq

thus the movement from b to q is a journey thru the zygal maze suggesting another point of restructure besides the historical necessity of the b c d cluster (see the Coda to *The Martyrology* Book III) the realization of C as a part of O structure reveals its twin in U of the central O further suggesting that U upper case was once Ɔ & that only the lower case was u (lower case completing & tying in the n) further a re-positioning of p q & U is pointed to in order to complete the palindromic elements leading us to

A B C D E F G H I J K L N O M R S T P Ɔ Q V X

thus in a certain sense the movements from A to V are contained in parentheses however in our current structuring b & q lie outside them suggesting a further re-structuring

A C B D E F G H I J K L N O M R S T P Q Ɔ V X

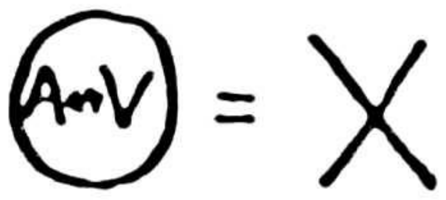
considered
then as a complete unit the SECRET NARRATIVE of the alphabet becomes

A (B D E F G H I J K L N C M R S T P Q) V = X

thus

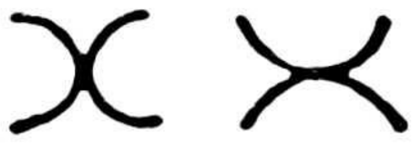
(A↔V)=X

X is the transformational symbol for the alphabet (note that the C Ɔ configuration is retained suggesting the whole could be written

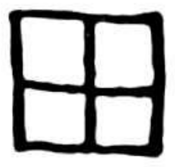


& thus the OX leading us back into A)

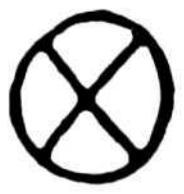
this leads me to believe that in the realphabet n was written ____ thus completing the triad ______ (lower case) the holy trinity? having to move into upper case to complete the palindromic quartet with the ___ thus two more zygal configurations emerge



these are obviously the concealed transitional figures that lead from H to X formed as they are out of the elements of O they point the way to another concealed figure the magic square formed by the H I overlay

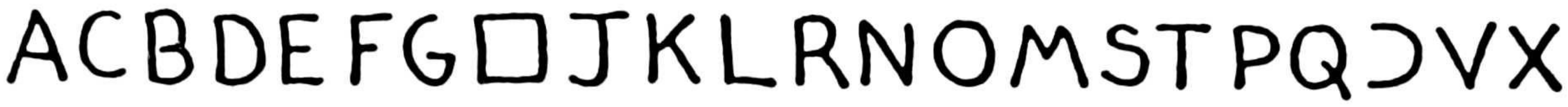


the relationship of this to the O X overlay is unmistakable

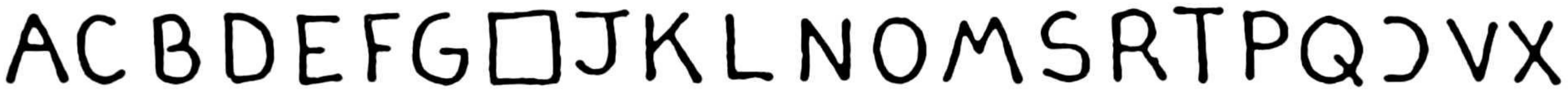


(note in both cases the sectioning of the perfect palindromic unit into 4 linking it to the C U Ɔ ∩ & b d p q units both of which are elements of zygal configurations note the linking of quartets with triadic structures)

□'s (pronounced HI) relationship to O suggests another palindromic positioning with the HI unit counting as one letter in our balancing X is actually a transformational sign for the entire alphabet (the sign of its equivalence being understood) & the actual formula for the original transformational alphabet being written (A↔V)X   we leave X out in figuring the palindromic balancing point for O   counting 8 positions back from the V the restructured alphabet now looks like this



however the L to l transformation in the switch to lower case & its reinforcement of the unity principle embodied in n O etc. thru the l reading out as "one" suggests its position in front of the n as the correct one   the question then becomes the position the R should be placed in   lower case r suggests a transitional character between n & v which would place it in between them in our reading



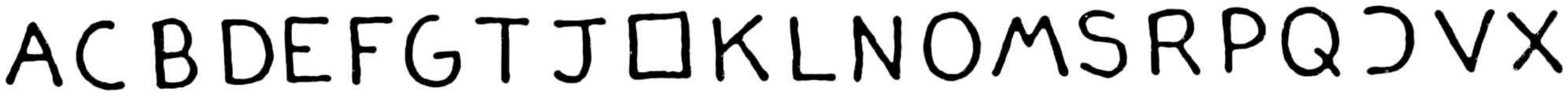
T however now appears out of place   note the similarity between TI&J   this in itself gives us a clue to its positioning   but once again it is the lower case secret doctrine (n.b. "lower" case the case beneath   the one under   reference back to the genital here you can see how the Y functions as a closed X actually warning us that something has been tampered with   the real meaning is "closed" to us unless we re-order & thus "open up" the alphabet) gives us the solution to our problem   + is the cross we have removed from the □ sign by isolating our suffering we are cut off from deeper meaning (i solating   sol as sun   solus as alone   sol as us (seul from the French alone))   we make the false i our sun (the centre of our uni verse)   thus the SECRET NARRATIVE places the T before the □ because it is an element of the developing consciousness a stage BEFORE HIgher consciousness   similarly j functions as a deeper (emotionally) i, its roots below the line (rooted in the earth—in things under)   thus we could write our equation

$$t + j = \square$$

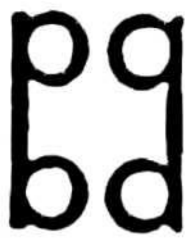
suggesting the positioning of these three characters in the realphabet should read

T J □

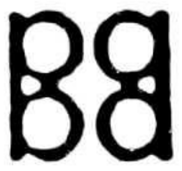
thus at this stage our alphabet reads



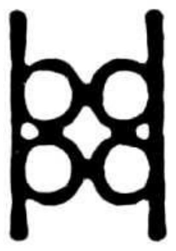
this leaves E F G K & S both G & K are concealed zygal characters in both cases this is only revealed thru using particular visual equivalents the lower case G that is written g immediately suggests a



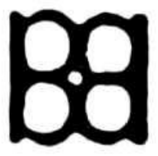
formation which joints together thusly



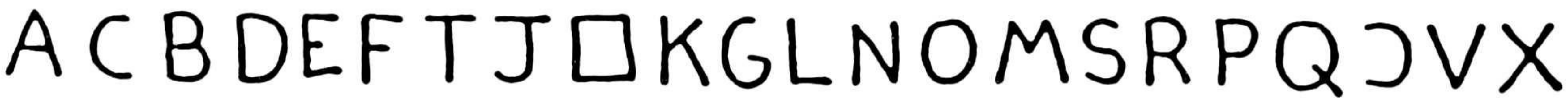
this is hinted at in the G Q g q relationship the particular cluster revealed here is of course the altered zygal formation

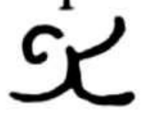


by compressing the figure even further we create the magic square structure



which is obviously transitional between □ & O G then should be placed between them in the realphabet



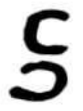
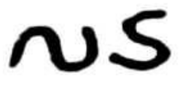
K's position is correct because it points back to the concealed zygal formation in T + J this is revealed when K is written  (obviously zygal) the revised equation then reads

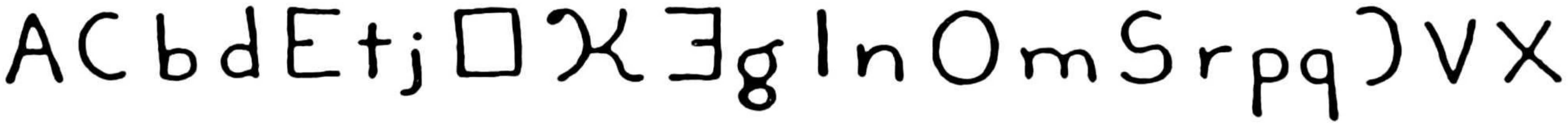
(tj>□<K)

E & F are obviously altered elements of the palindrome E Ǝ which should function as parentheses for the TJ □ K equation since joined EƎ they form an upper case I (i am indebted to david aylward's ACROSTICS for this particular insight) why the Ǝ was reversed & a line dropped to make it read F can only be guessed at our realphabet now reads

ACBDETJ□KƎGLNOMSRPQↃVX

note that □ has once again been restored to the 8th position forming its balance with the O note further the similarity between 8 & g (see my "The End of the Affair" in *How Do I Love Thee* for a further exploration of this)

S is simply  suggesting that m was originally written ∩ U its positioning is correct revealing as it does the four elements of O that will recur in the secret narrative thru the equative unit  this completes the re-structuring of the 22 letter realphabet & the consequent revelation of its secret narrative



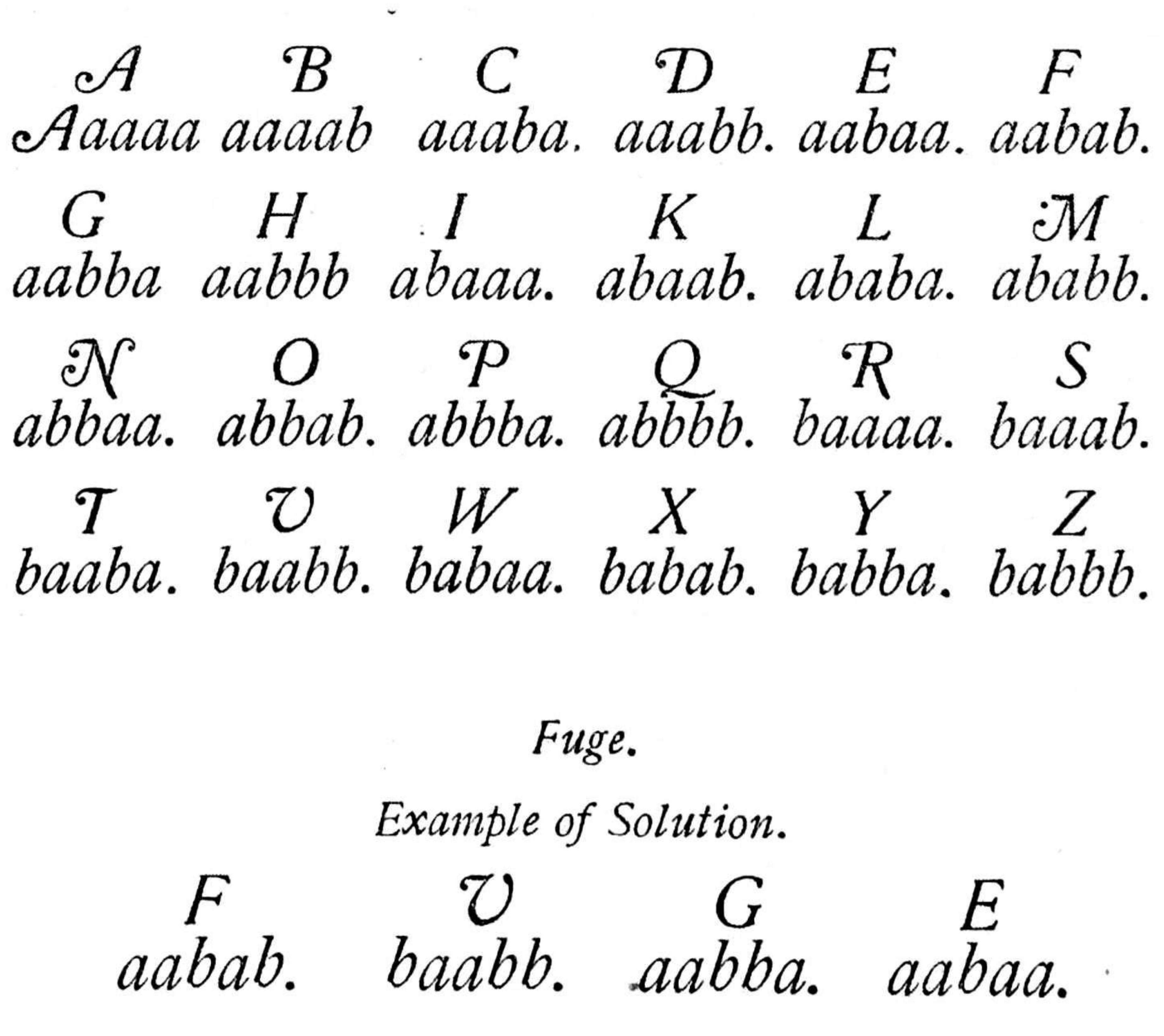
obviously W is an ambiguous letter suggesting as it does two readings the one destructive the other positive this suggests to me that it is the transitional member of the movement from X into the present Y Z terminator & is essential for a true reading of the alphabet though not of the realphabet

it should be further noted that the removal of O from its centrality in order to balance it with the HI sign is necessitated by the revelation of actual balance points in the realphabet being located in key palindromic placements & that the true secret narrative is much more complex than a simple central focal point

Sir Francis Bacon

Bacon's biliteral cipher is lettristically based and typographically dependent. Two fonts are required, distinguishable from one another by only the slightest visual difference. In Bacon's system any single letter may be represented by a five-unit combination of two letters: A = aaaaa, B = aaaab, etc. Bacon's is an early binary system and precursor of the International Morse Code. Bacon's own example is "Stay 'til I come to you", which is deciphered by replacing each italic letter by B and each roman by A. Referring to Bacon's table we find the message generates the biliteral combination of aabab ababa babba bb, i.e., F L Y. A negative aspect of the Baconian cipher is its quantitative profligacy, requiring of the ciphered message five times as many characters as the plain text. For more on the biliteral cipher and its relation to Bacon's broader scheme for improving learning, see the preface to this section.

Biliteral Cipher

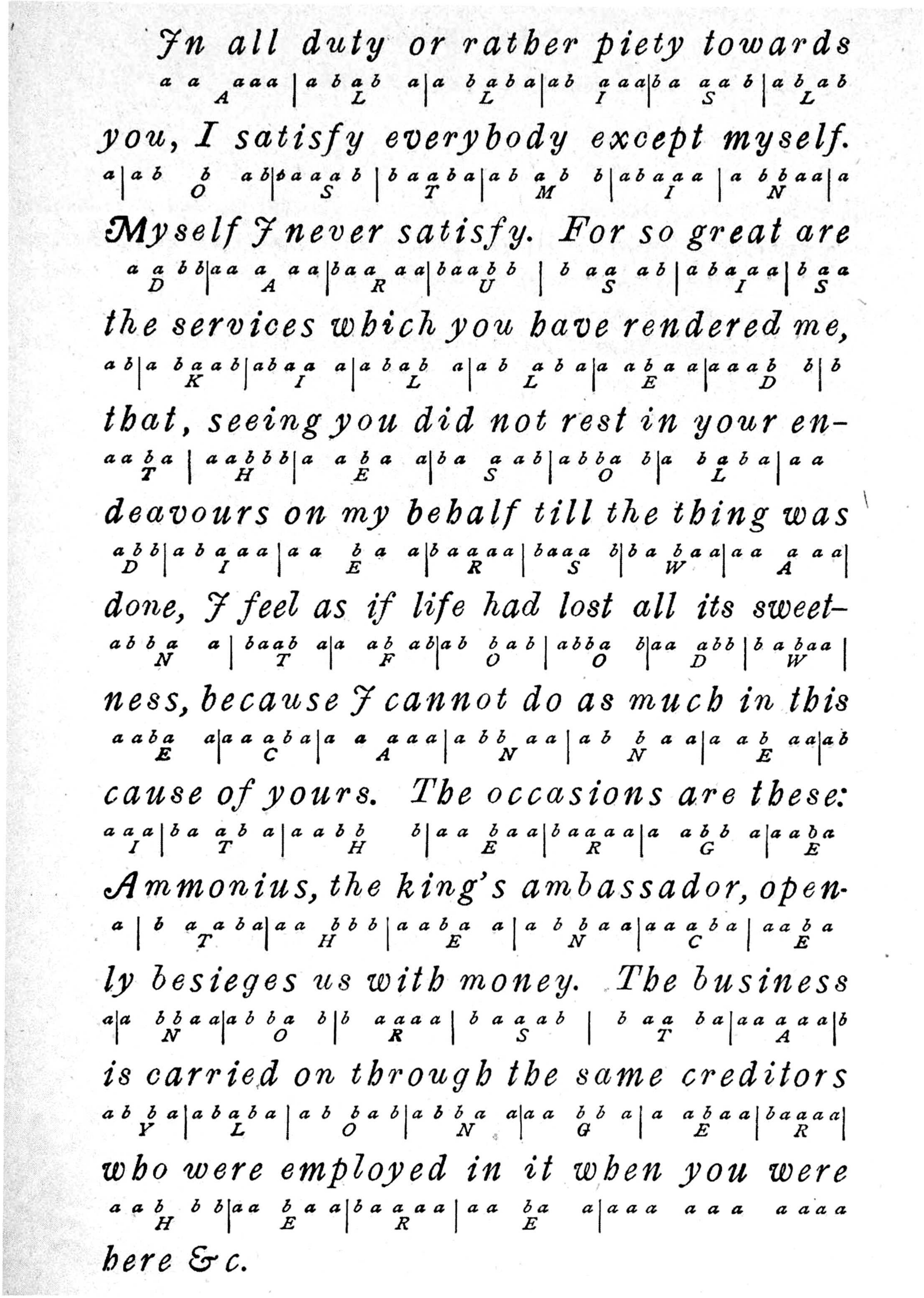


A	*B*	*C*	*D*	*E*	*F*
Aaaaa	*aaaab*	*aaaba.*	*aaabb.*	*aabaa.*	*aabab.*
G	*H*	*I*	*K*	*L*	*M*
aabba	*aabbb*	*abaaa.*	*abaab.*	*ababa.*	*ababb.*
N	*O*	*P*	*Q*	*R*	*S*
abbaa.	*abbab.*	*abbba.*	*abbbb.*	*baaaa.*	*baaab.*
T	*V*	*W*	*X*	*Y*	*Z*
baaba.	*baabb.*	*babaa.*	*babab.*	*babba.*	*babbb.*

Fuge.

Example of Solution.

F	*V*	*G*	*E*
aabab.	*baabb.*	*aabba.*	*aabaa.*



In all duty or rather piety towards
aaaaa | ababa | ababa | abaaa | baaab | abab
A L L I S L

you, I satisfy everybody except myself.
a | abbab | baaab | baaba | ababb | abaaa | abbaa | a
O S T M I N

Myself I never satisfy. For so great are
aaabb | aaaaa | baaaa | baabb | baaab | abaaa | baa
D A R U S I S

the services which you have rendered me,
ab | abaab | abaaa | ababa | ababa | aabaa | aaabb | b
K I L L E D

that, seeing you did not rest in your en-
aaba | aabbb | aabaa | baaab | abbab | ababa | aa
T H E S O L

deavours on my behalf till the thing was
abb | abaaa | aabaa | baaaa | baaab | babaa | aaaaa |
D I E R S W A

done, I feel as if life had lost all its sweet-
abbaa | baaba | aabab | abbab | abbab | aaabb | babaa |
N T F O O D W

ness, because I cannot do as much in this
aabaa | aaaba | aaaaa | abbaa | abbaa | aabaa | ab
E C A N N E

cause of yours. The occasions are these:
aaa | baaba | aabbb | aabaa | baaaa | aabba | aaba
I T H E R G E

Ammonius, the king's ambassador, open-
a | baaba | aabbb | aabaa | abbaa | aaaba | aaba
T H E N C E

ly besieges us with money. The business
a | abbaa | abbab | baaaa | baaab | baaba | aaaaa | b
N O R S T A

is carried on through the same creditors
abba | ababa | abbab | abbaa | aabba | aabaa | baaaa |
Y L O N G E R

who were employed in it when you were
aabbb | aabaa | baaaa | aabaa | aaa aaa aaaa
H E R E

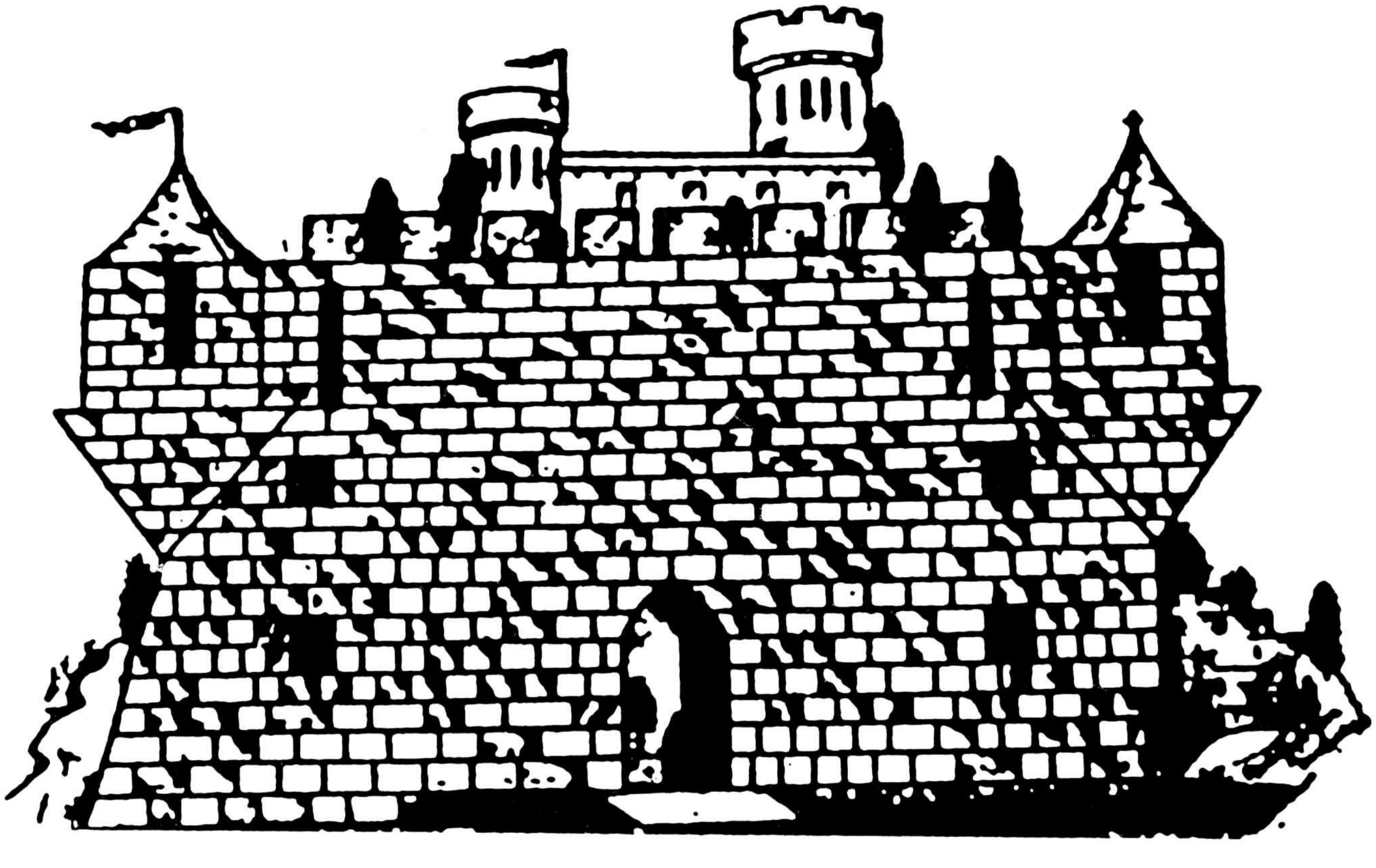
here &c.

William F. Friedman

As head of the U.S. Army cryptanalytic bureau, Friedman enjoyed an illustrious career that culminated in his deciphering of the Japanese wartime cipher system known as "Purple Code." His biliteral cipher contained in the drawing of a castle encrypts the following short text:

My business is to write prescriptions
And then to see my doses taken;
But now I find I spend my time
Endeavouring to out-Bacon Bacon.

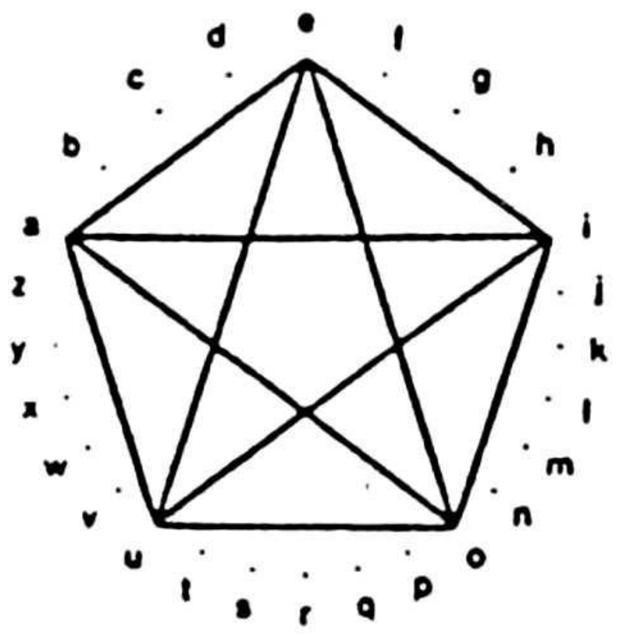
Biliteral Cipher



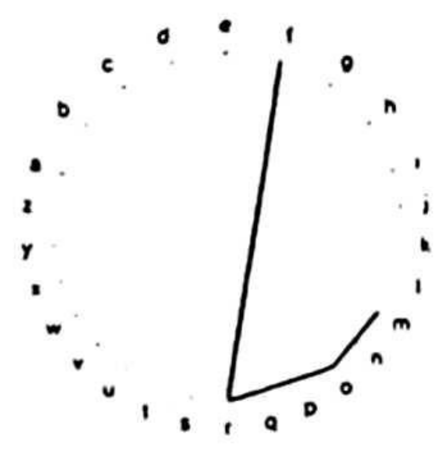
Michael Winkler

Where Signs Resemble Thoughts

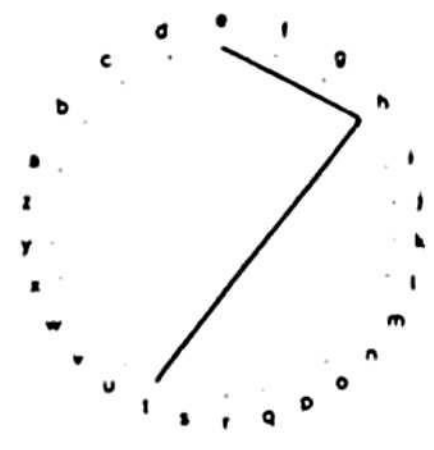
All of the "word-images" (ideographic images generated by the spelling of words) are produced from the same configuration or matrix of letter-points. The matrix is based on a circle of letters organized around a pentagram of vowels. Each of the twenty-six letters of the Alphabet is associated with a specific point on the perimeter of a circle. Lines are drawn to interconnect these letter-points according to the spelling of the word printed below each image.



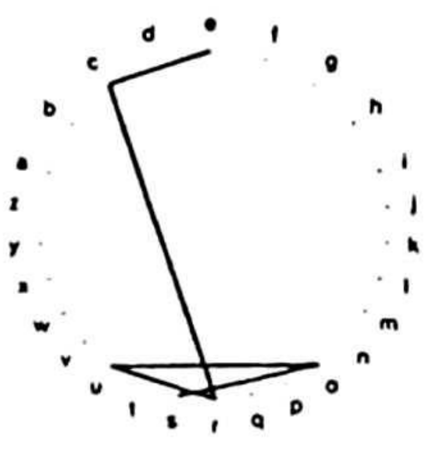
a-e-i-o-u



From



the



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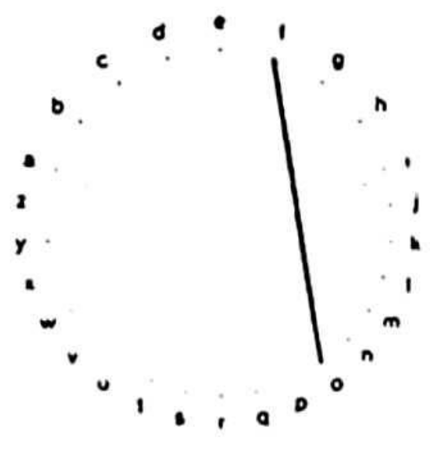

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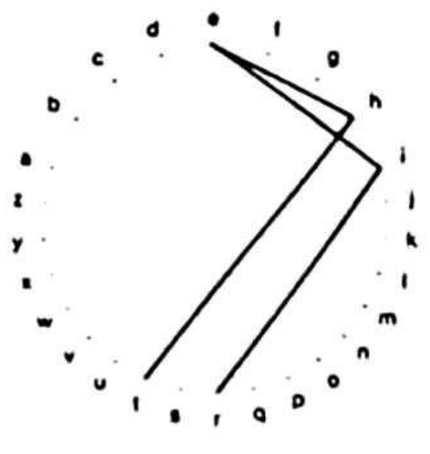

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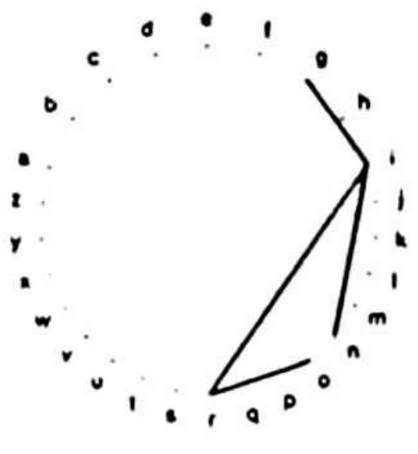

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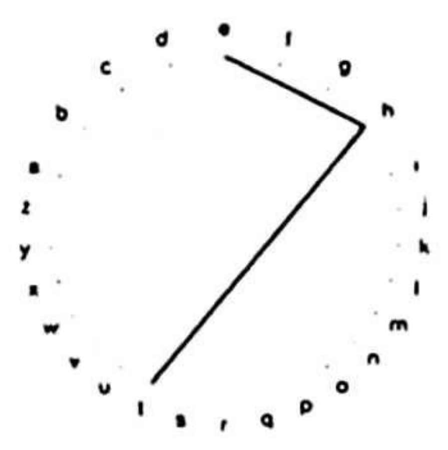
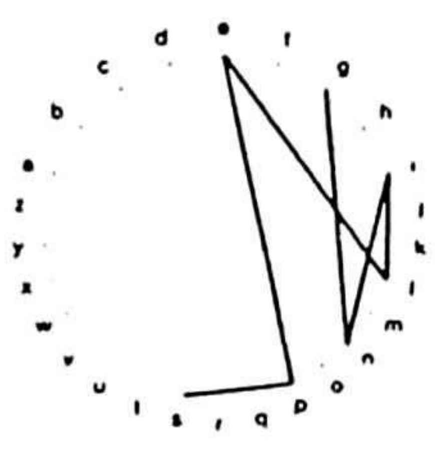
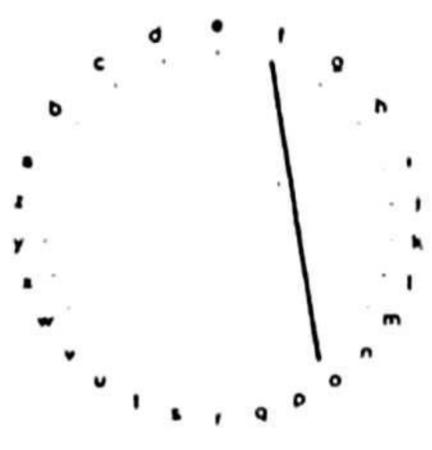


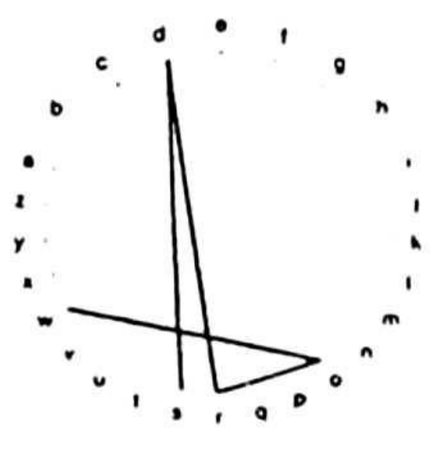
the



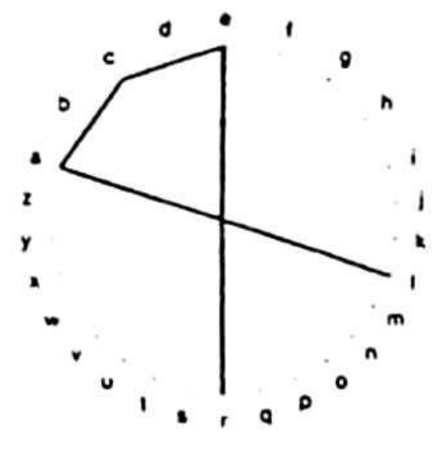
spelling



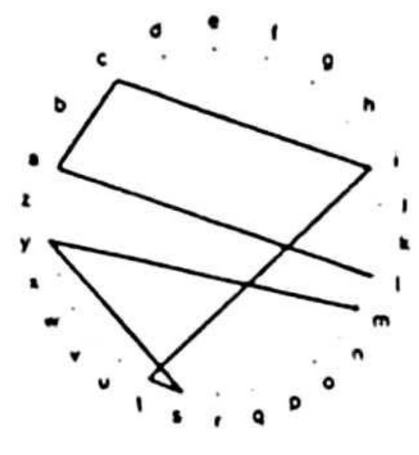
of



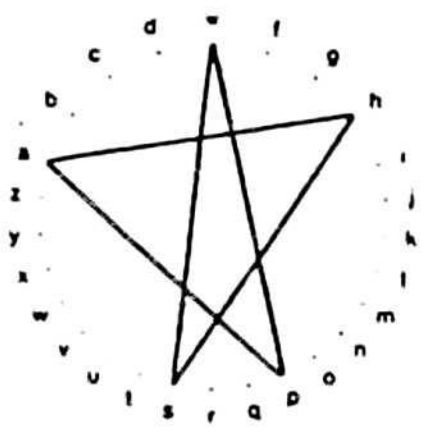
words



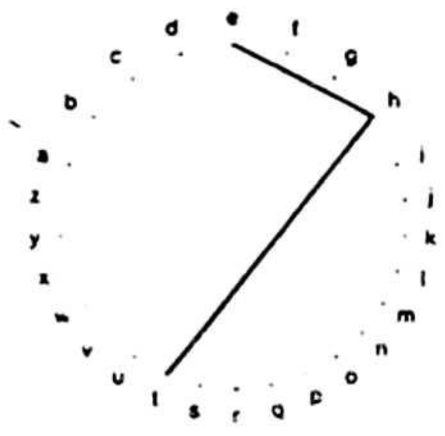
recall



mystical



shapes.



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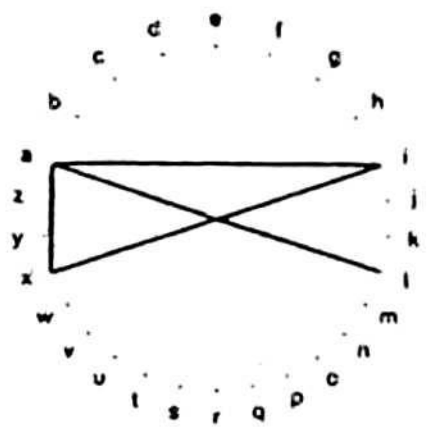

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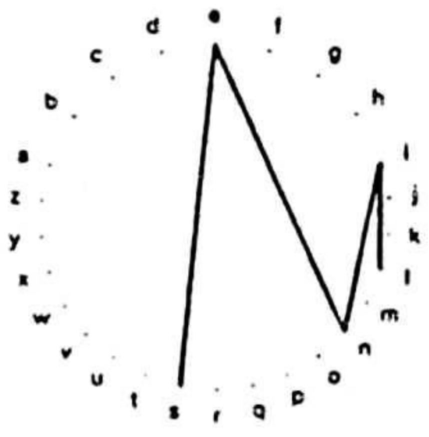

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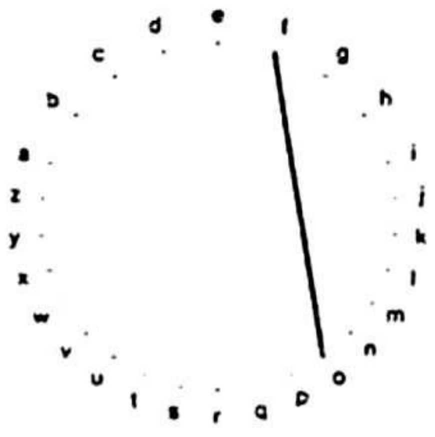

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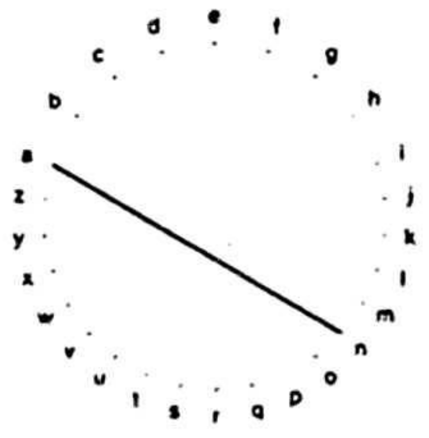

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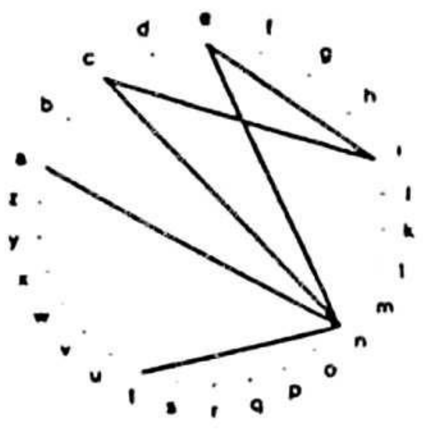

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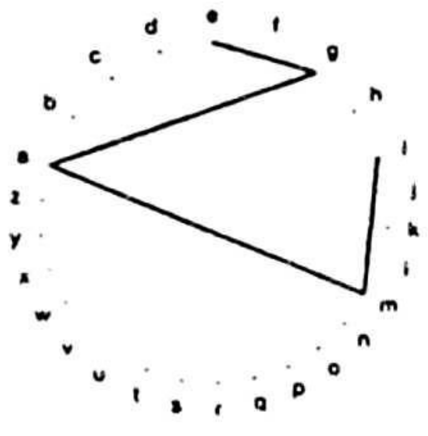

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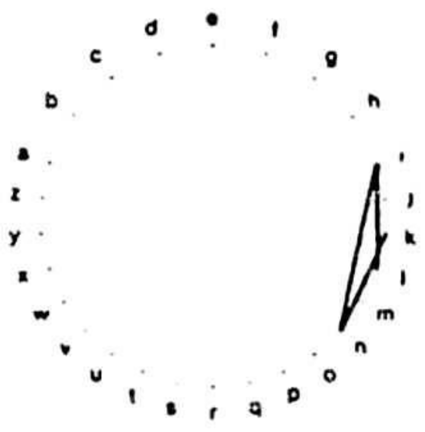

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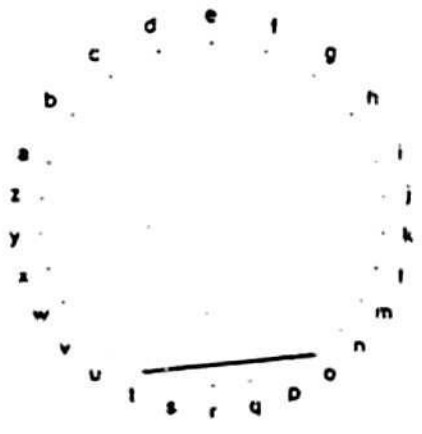

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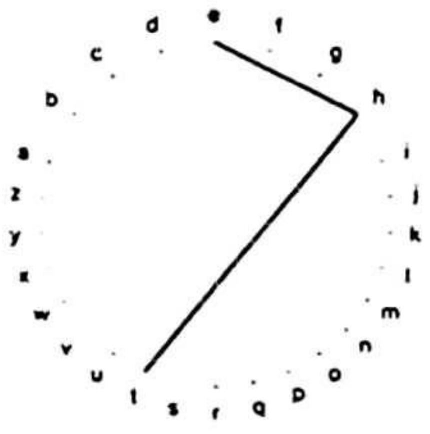

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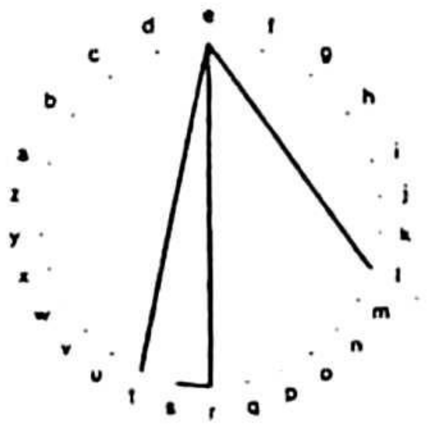

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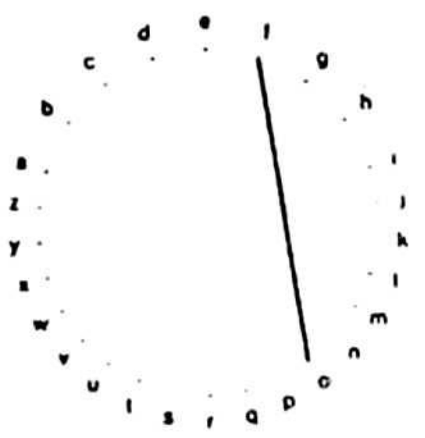

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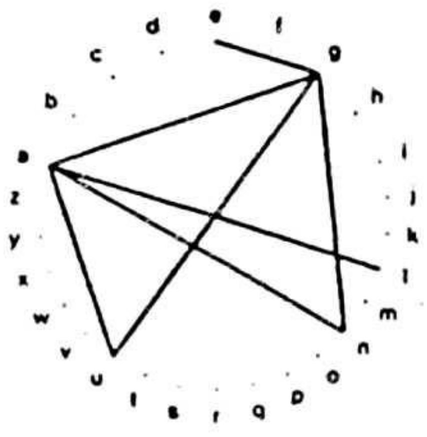

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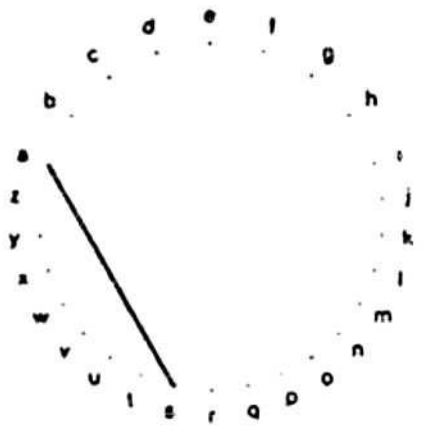

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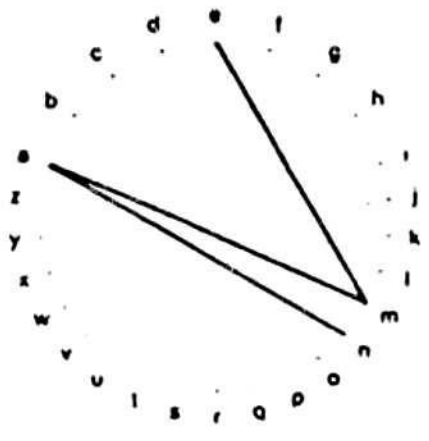

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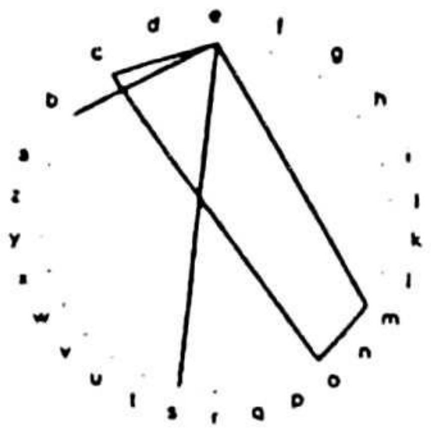

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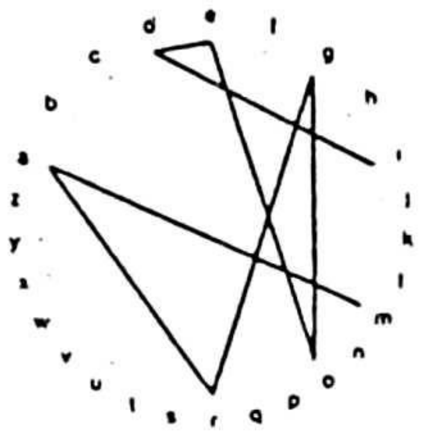

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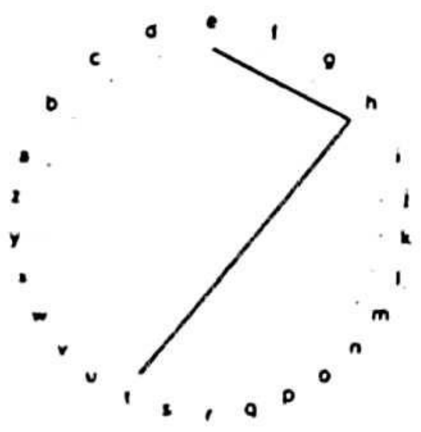

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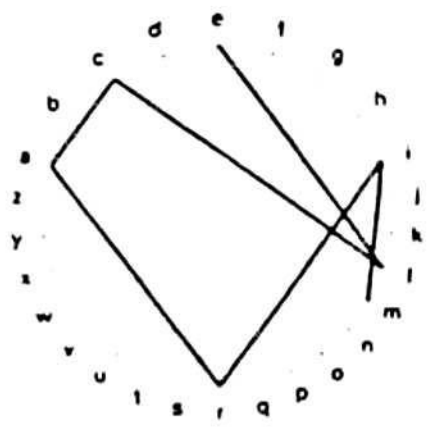

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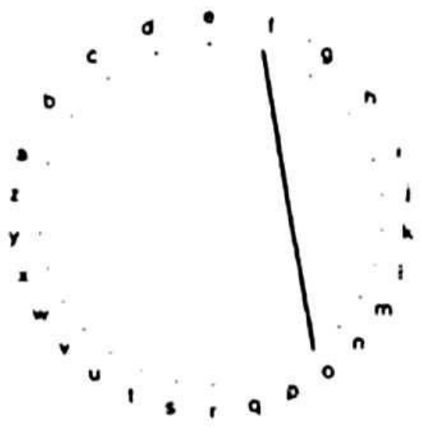

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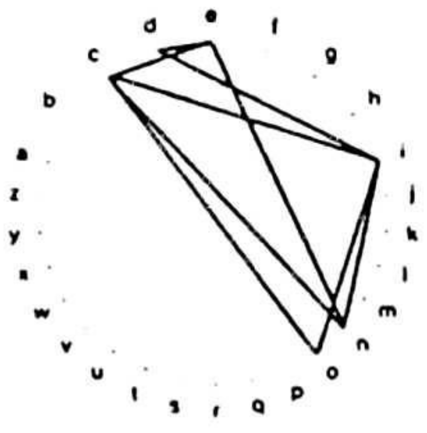

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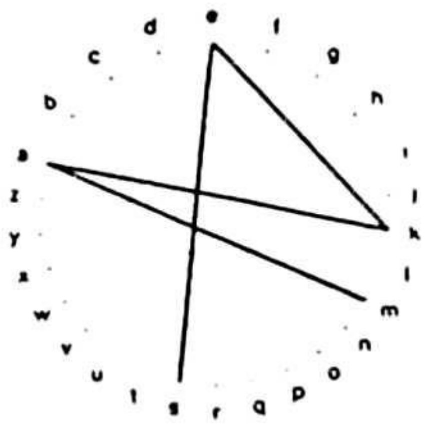

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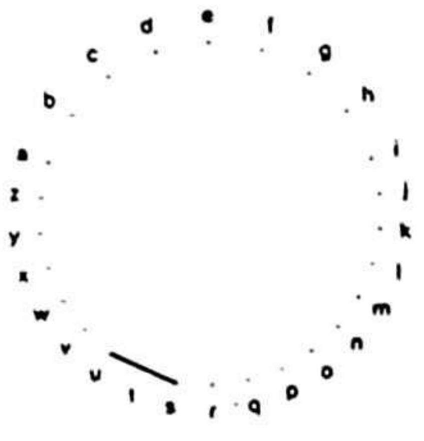

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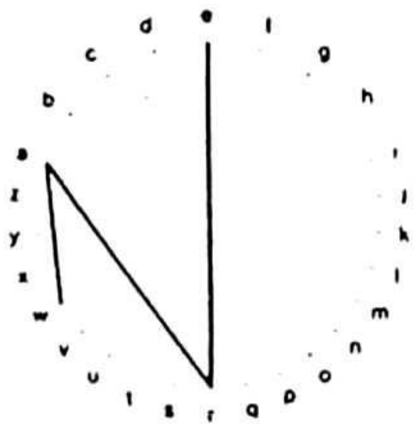

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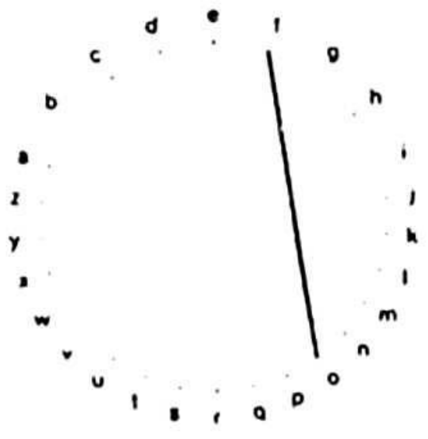

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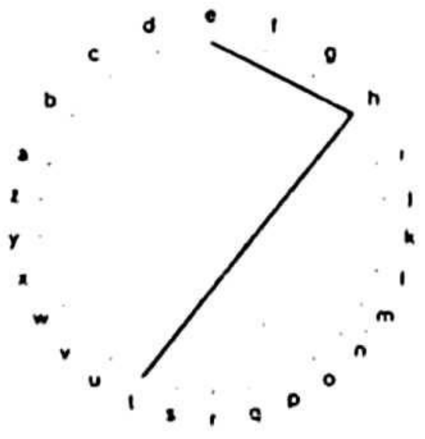

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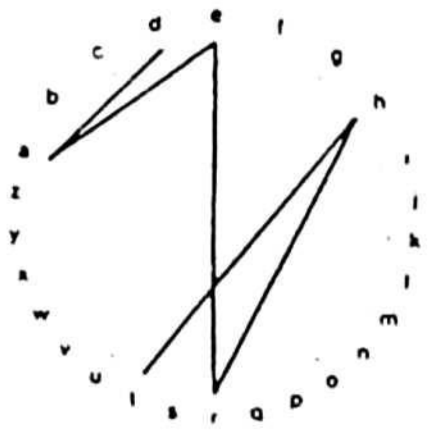

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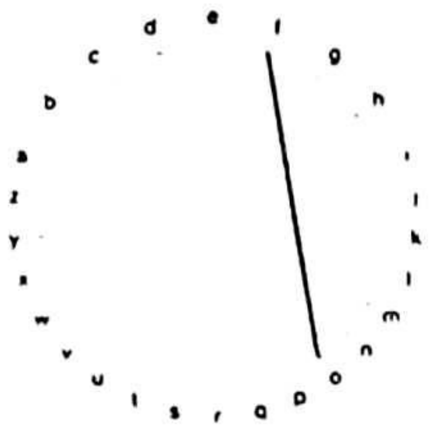

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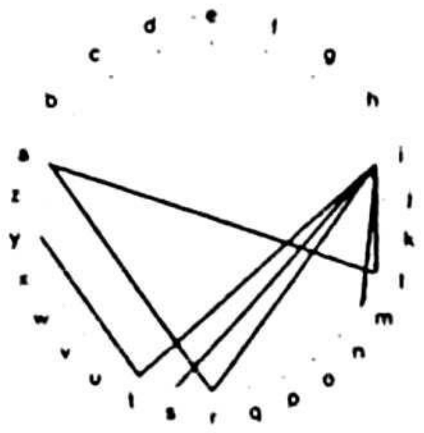
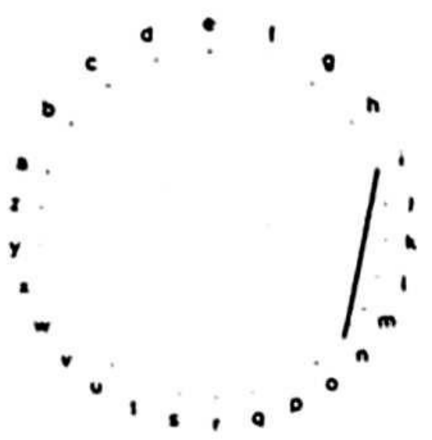


similarity

Michael Winkler



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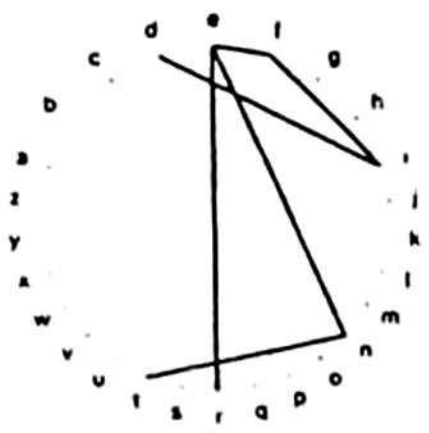

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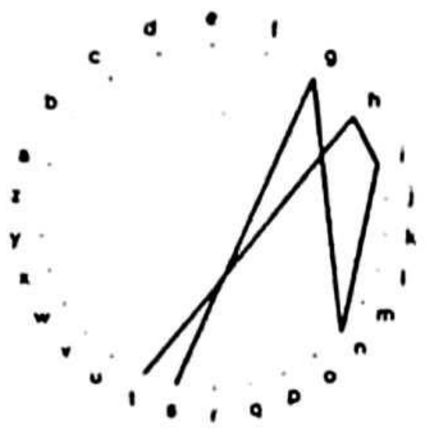

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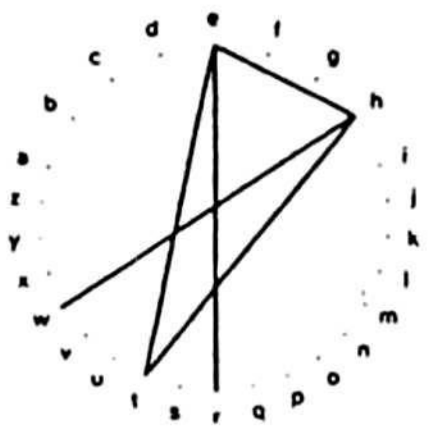

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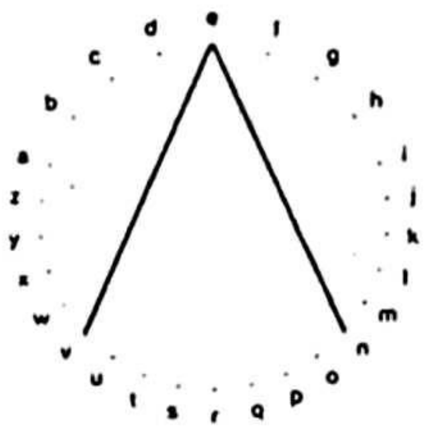

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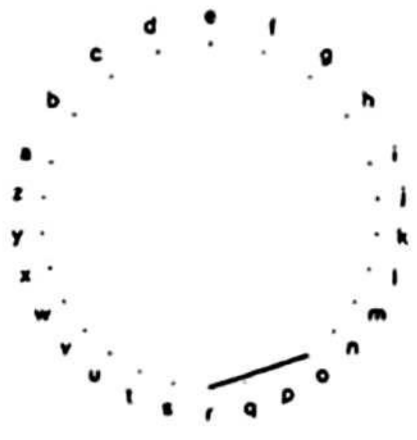

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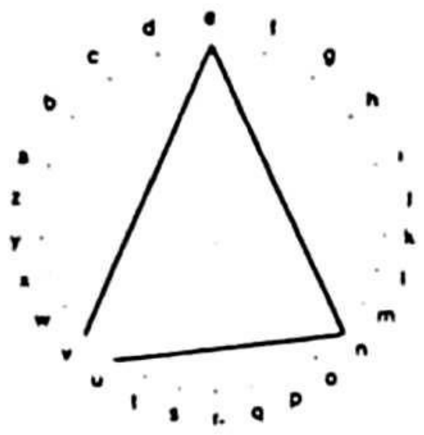

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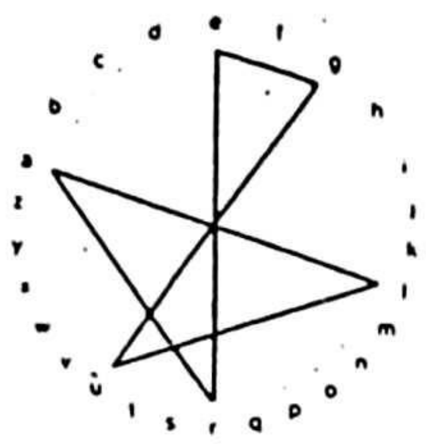

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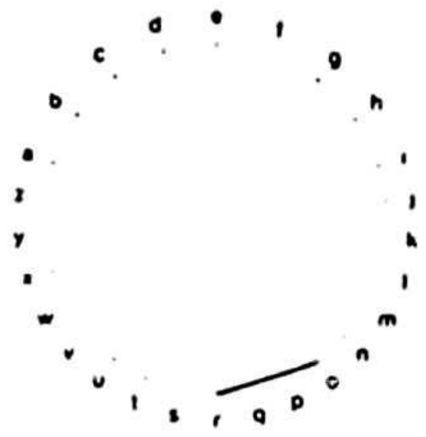

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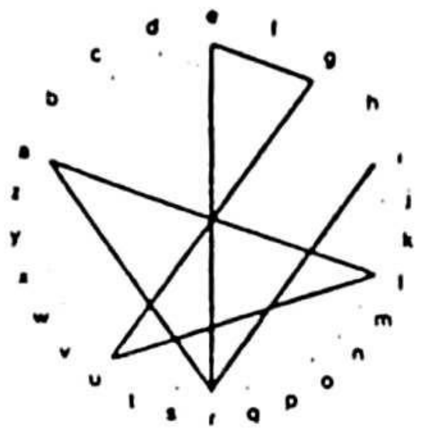

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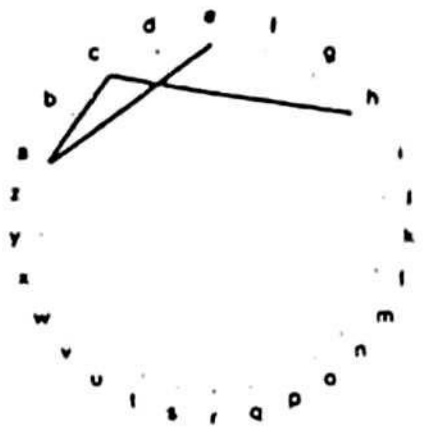

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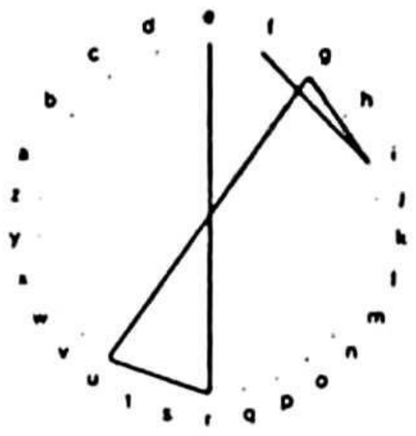

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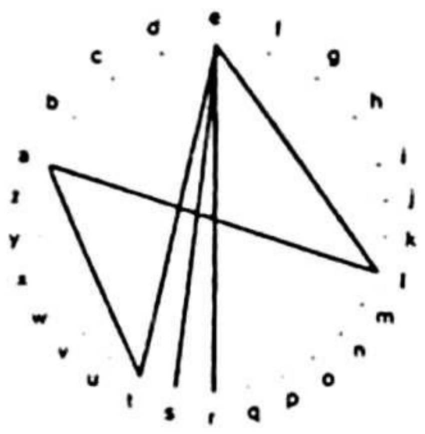

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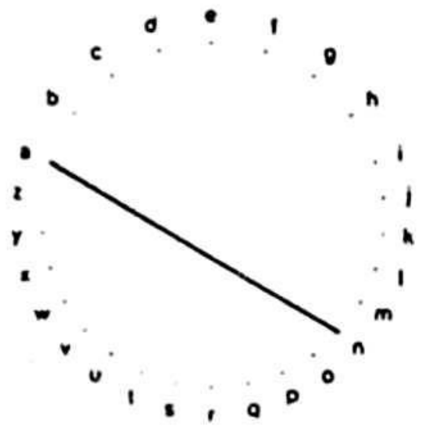

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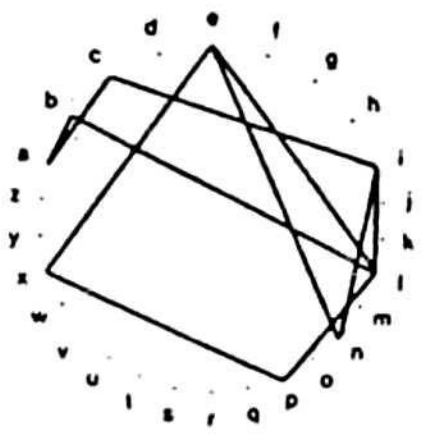

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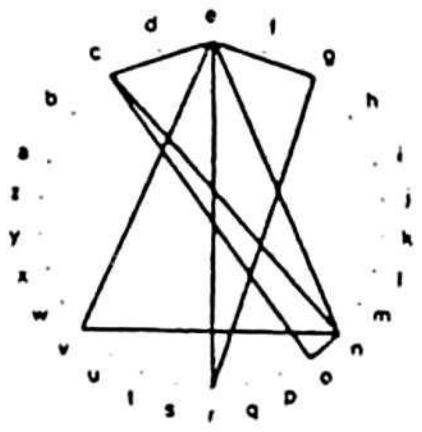

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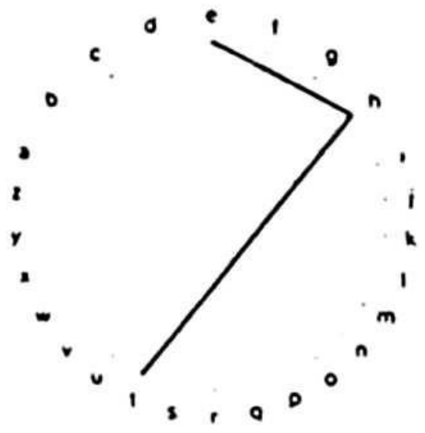

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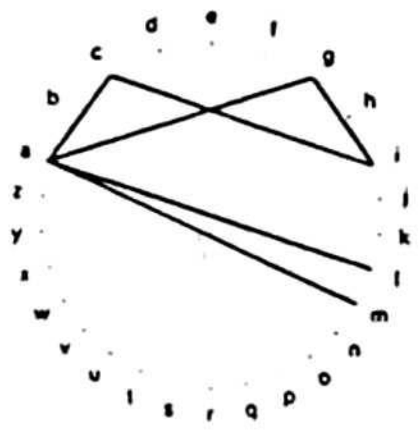

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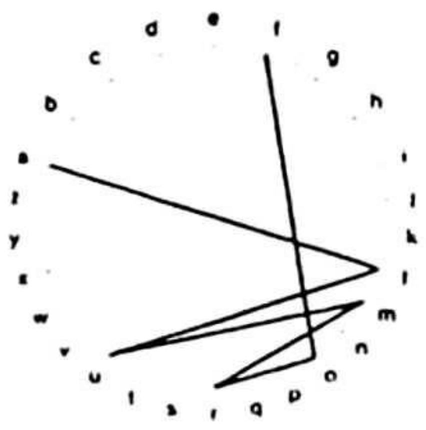

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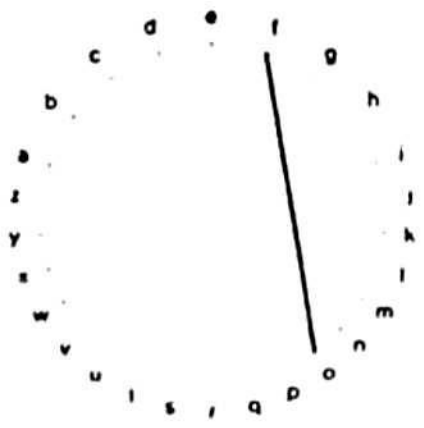

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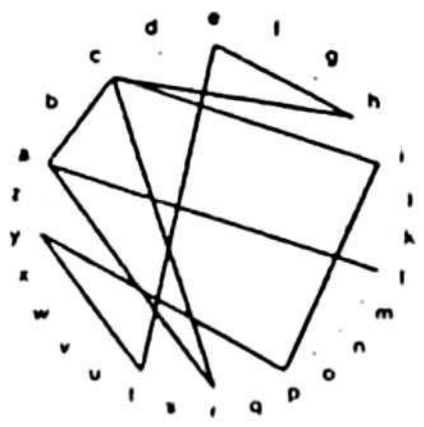

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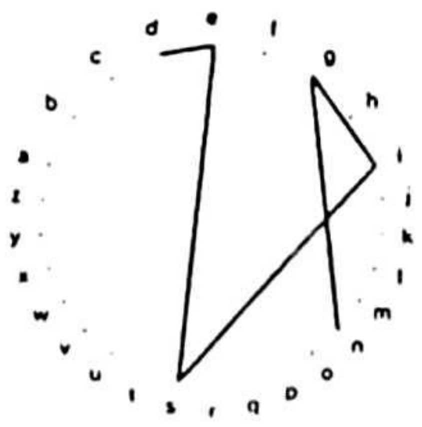

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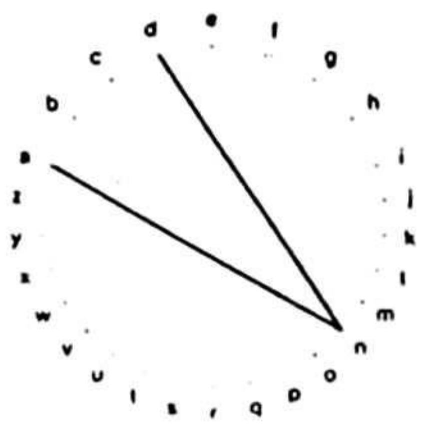

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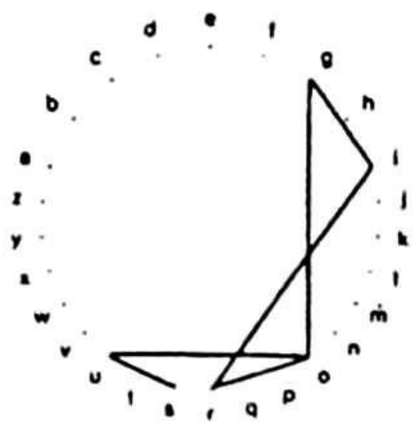

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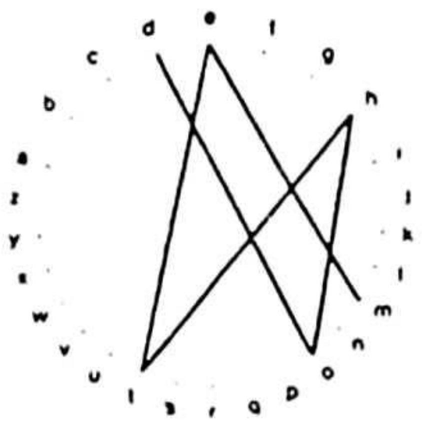

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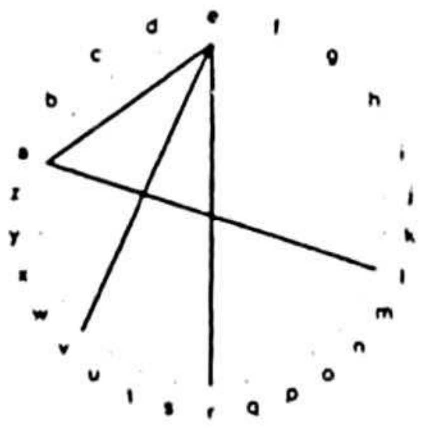

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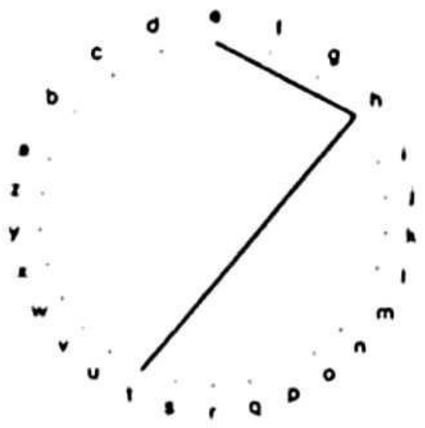

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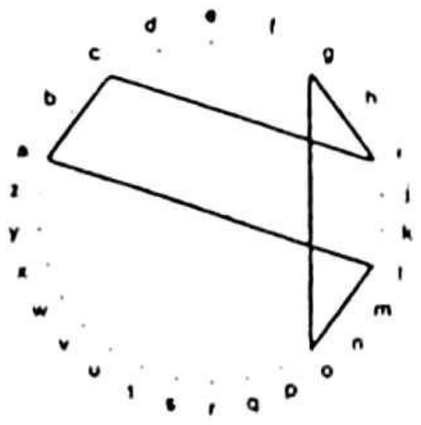

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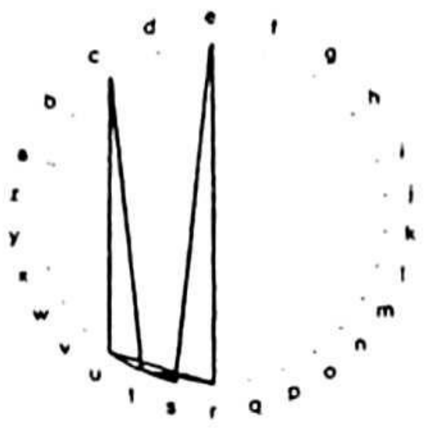

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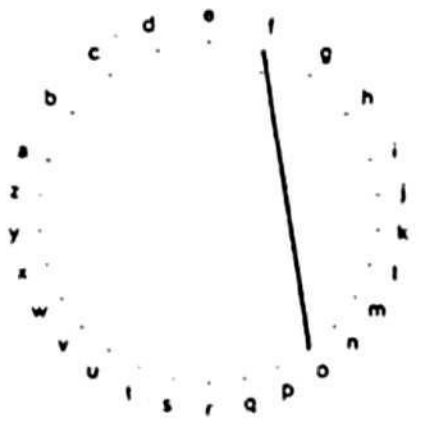

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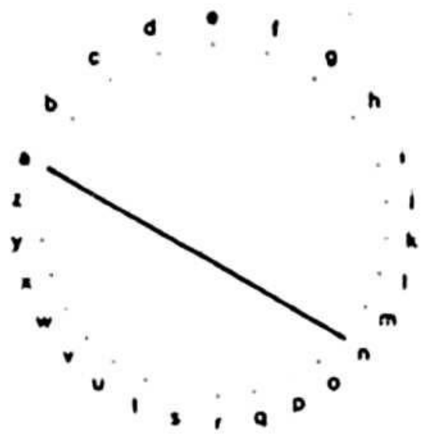

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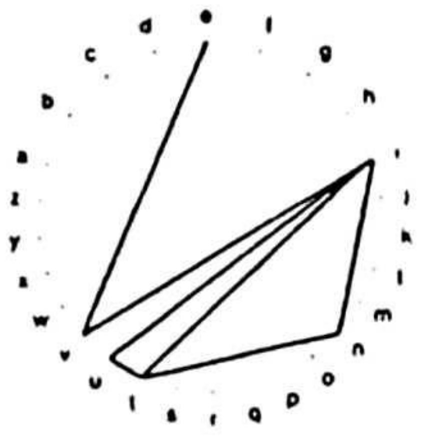

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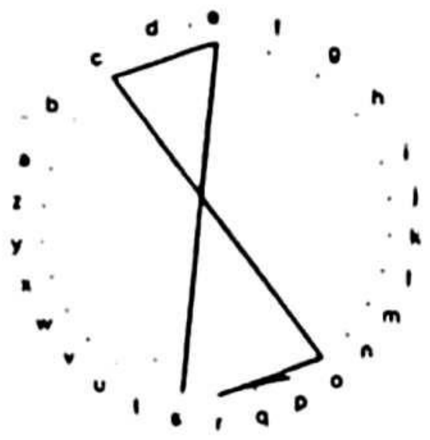

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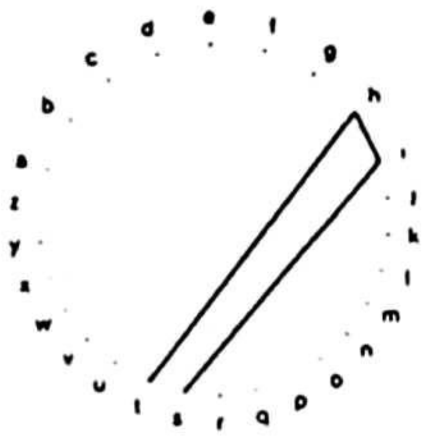

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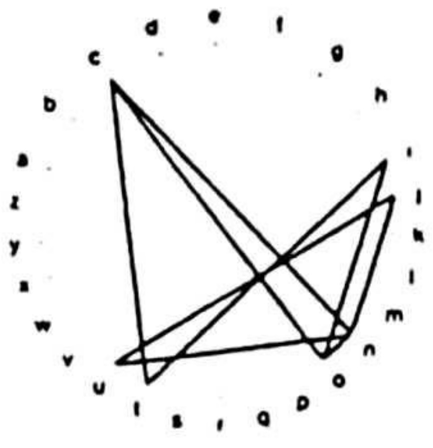

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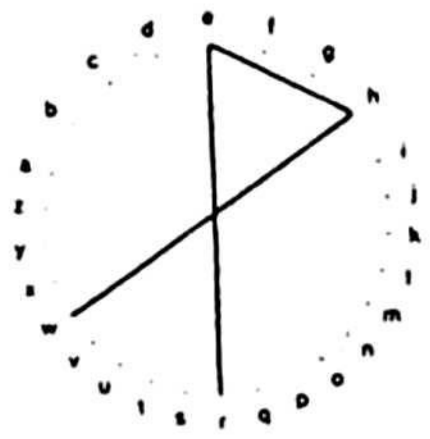

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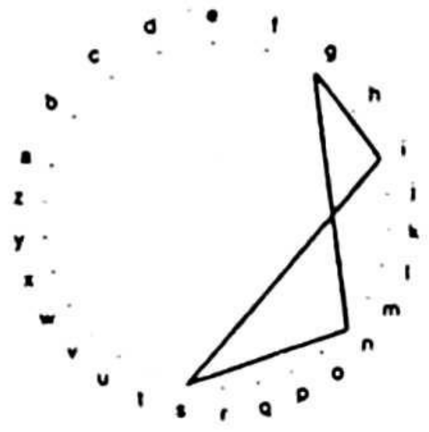

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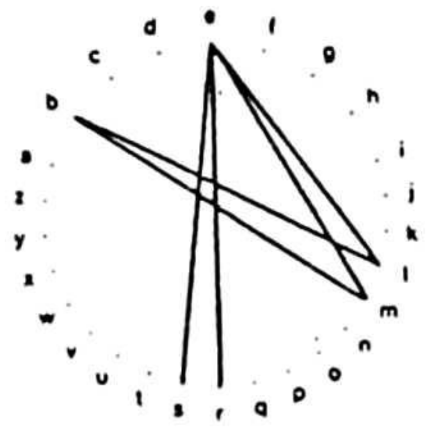

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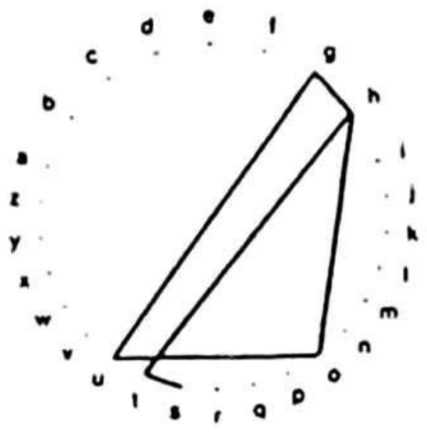

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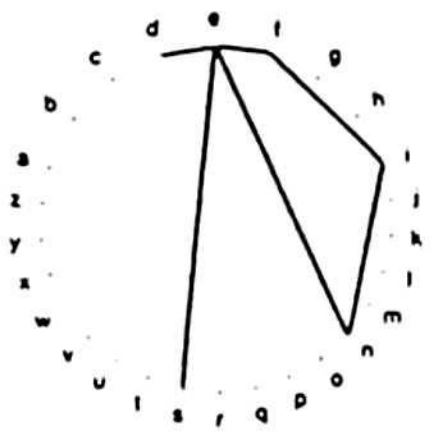

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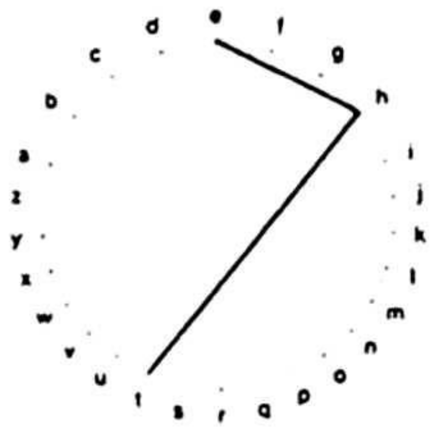

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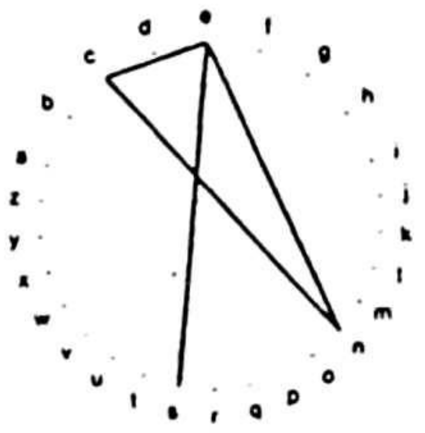

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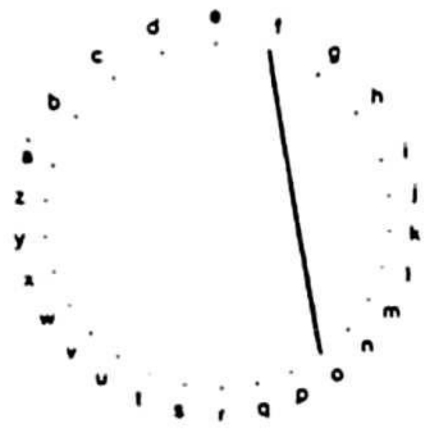

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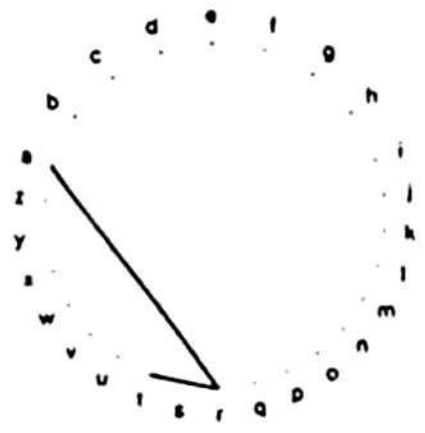

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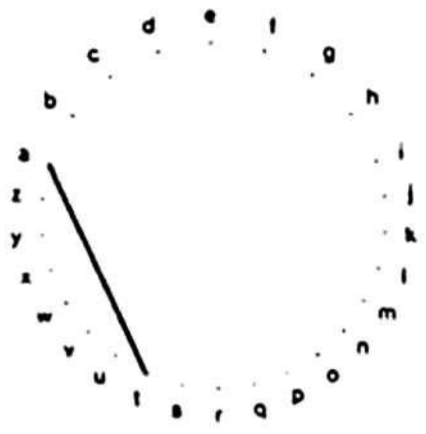

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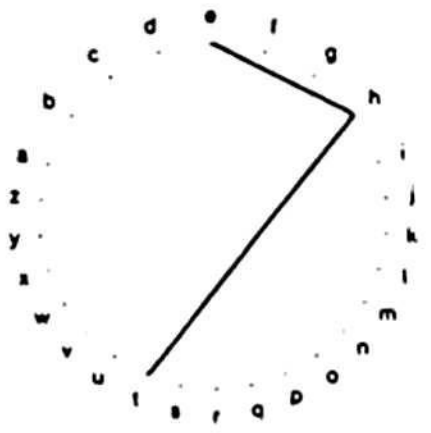

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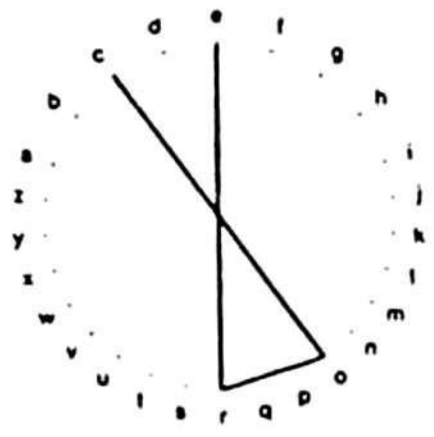

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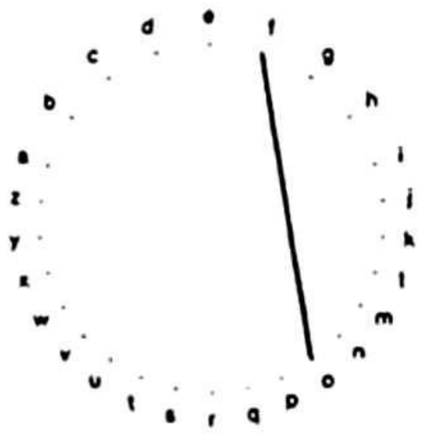

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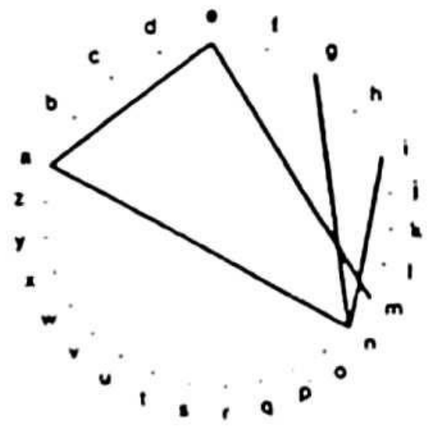


meaning.

Michael Winkler

Spelling, Saving, Spending

Gilles Deleuze makes the bold pronouncement that "language is an egg on the road to differentiation." It was Humpty Dumpty's fate in that oviform condition to fall and shatter beyond repair. Whether eggs, towers, or shevirath ha-kelim, *the breakup and breakdown of language is one of our oldest narratives and is inseparable from that other narrative of its reconstitution and recovery. "This is the alphabet q w e r t y u i o p a s d f g h j k l z x c v b n m," writes William Carlos Williams. "The extraordinary thing is that no one has yet taken the trouble to write it out fully." It is to the variform visual and acoustic contours of the alphabet, understood as a perplexing economy of excess, that the writer-reformers in this section turn their attention with inventive parsimony.*

The Latin alphabet has long been the preferred orthography of Western languages, but under the 800 years of the Roman Republic and Empire, "not one of the tongues of the conquered and governed peoples was ever recorded in Roman letters." Latin letters were exclusive to Latin, and only slowly underwent adaptation to other languages—this delay reflecting above all a discrepancy between literacy and orality. The critical distinction between the spoken word and its written, visible equivalent is eloquently stated in Samuel Johnson's Preface to his Dictionary.

> As language was at its beginning merely oral, all words of necessity or common use were spoken before they were written; and while they were unfixed by any visible signs, must have been spoken with great diversity, as we now observe those who cannot read to catch sounds imperfectly, and utter them negligently. When this wild and barbarous jargon was first reduced to an alphabet, every penman endeavoured to express, as he could, the sounds which he was accustomed to pronounce or to receive, and vitiated in writing such words as were already vitiated in speech. The powers of the letters, when they were applied to a new language, must have been vague and unsettled, and therefore different hands would exhibit the same sound by different combinations.

Orthographic chaos marks a second Babel, the graphic scattering of characters adding a confusion of marks to the confusio linguarum. *However, this second derangement went through various phases in various languages. Indeed, between 700 and 1100 A.D. English spelling came close to being phonetic, and in Chaucerian times a partial orthographic stability was maintained (alongside a vast importation of polysyllabic vocabulary). The following two centuries, however, were ones of vast confusion. Imported polysyllables were especially perplexing, with no clarity as to a precise vowel sound and the* *location of accents. Astley C. Partridge mentions the orthoepic disagreement over "whether or not consonants were silent" and cites the example of "the initial aspirate in words of french origin."*

Hans Jensen assures that alphabetical developments are limited to two directions only. "A further development *of the alphabetical script is now no longer conceivable as to principle, but only as to degree, namely 1.* in the direction of greater accuracy in the reproduction of the various sounds of a language. *2. in the direction of a* greater simplification of the representative signs themselves." *The human defiance of inevitable linguistic change finds its clearest articulation in the numerous schemes to establish orthographic stability. Orthography, of course, held an honored place as one of the three branches of* grammatica *(the others being etymology and syntax). In addition to spelling,* orthographia *comprised aspects of calligraphy, pronunciation (*orthoepy*), and typography.*

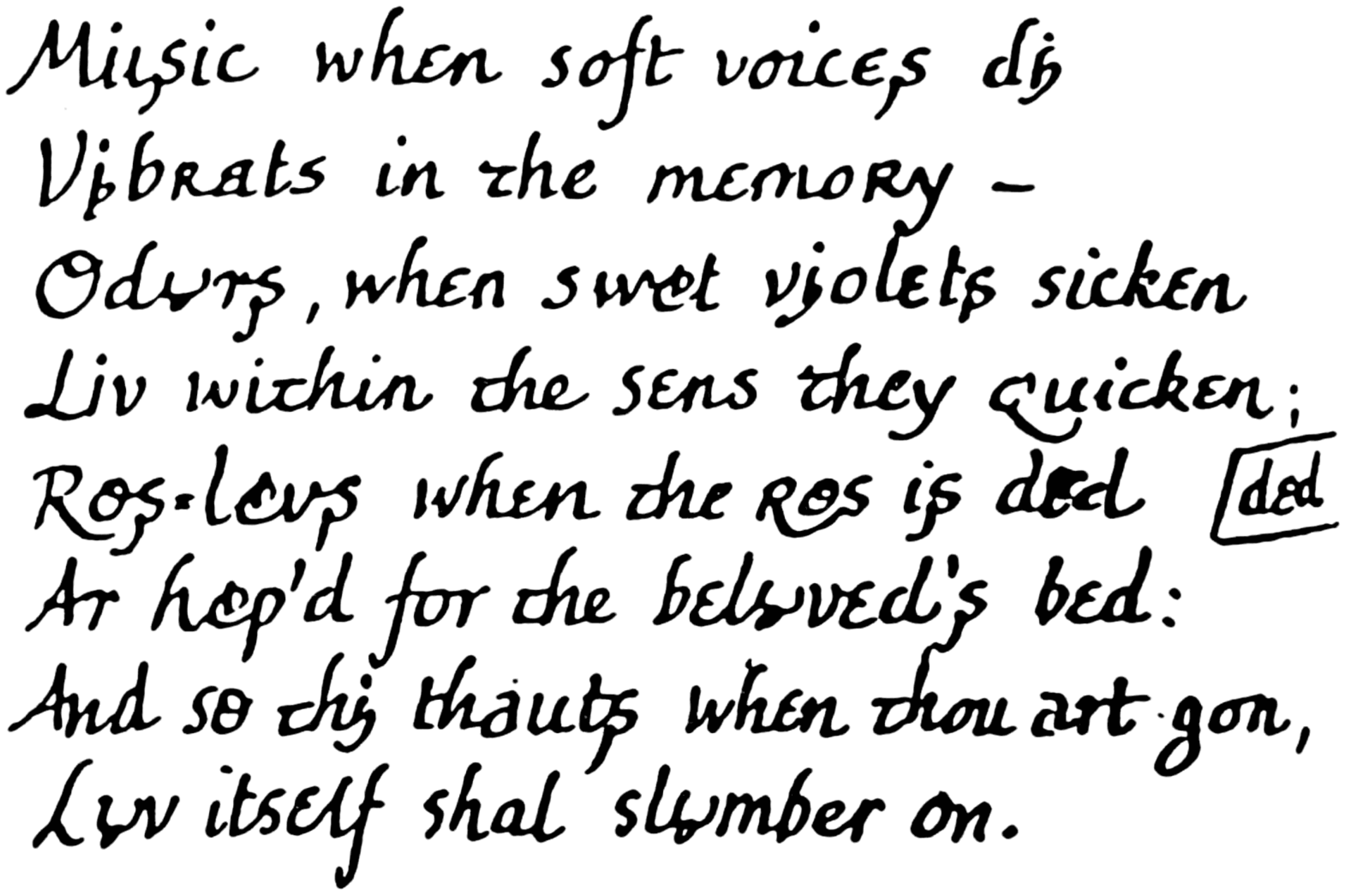
The attempt to establish orthographic stability within the English language along phonetic lines gained significant impetus both from the earlier attempts at orthographic reform in France (circa 1540) and from the concurrent debate in England over the correct pronunciation of ancient Greek. This latter controversy was carried on between Bishop Stephen Gardiner, Sir John Cheke, and Sir Thomas Smith. The matter became more urgent due to the proliferation of literacy at this time, which hastened the functional demise of the scrivener who had previously effected a moderate stability in spelling. Orthographic reform, since its inauguration in the mid-sixteenth century, took on three forms: augmentive alphabets, reductive alphabets, and diacritical additions to existing ones. The history of orthography, according to Smith, is the history of distortion from an original exact correspondence between sounds and letters; rectification would aim at recuperation of this originary relation. Claudius Holybrand's orthographic reforms (1576) are limited to super- and subscriptural marks on all letters superfluous to pronunciation, a diacritical notation that anticipates the sous rature *of Derrida. A small cross above or below the significant letter denotes it as superfluous to pronunciation. Holybrand's reasons for this timidity are worth remarking. Orthography shows the derivation of the diction, indicates quantity, allows for pause within "a ful pronunciation," and finally preserves as comprehensible our ancient texts. Holybrand additionally links his orthographic system to mnemotechnics. "The young learner . . . when he shall happen on other books printed without these characters, he may remember which letters ought to be vttered, and which ought not."*

Among the Tudor reformers of orthography, William Bullokar stands as the pioneer advocate of diacritical markings ("stryks, prikz, & notz") to supplement the existing alphabet, as opposed to a radical augmentation of characters themselves. Bullokar's system is described by Otto Jespersen as "the traditional spelling with a host of mystical and inconsistently employed dots and accents over and under the letters." He argued his case in Bullokar's Booke at Large, for the Amendment of Orthographie for English Speech, *in the pamphlet* A Short Introduction or guiding, to print, write, and reade Inglish speech *(both 1580), and in* William Bullokarz Pamphlets for Grammar *(1586). Among works translated into his orthography are* Aesops Fablz in true Ortography with Grammar-nóts *(1585). It is important to remember that his spelling reforms were part of a wider plan for general* *linguistic reformation. The latter includes the compilation of a dictionary to preserve the orthographic reforms and a grammar to maintain stability in usage. Bullokar is aware too of the cognitive resistance to the introduction of new characters, and the separate problem of a reformed orthography ultimately rendering unintelligible all texts written in conventional spelling.*

An intriguing implication of phonetic reformation is the ability not only to standardize orthography (with its semantic articulation onto stable visible representation), but also to realize an exact transcription of variations in dialect. Hence, phonetic reform has a contradictory pull both toward and away from logocentric stability. In this respect John Hart's reforms show a distinct class bias, concentrating on "the best speech used of the learned"—in other words the court of London. Sir Thomas Smith's proposed alphabet reforms in Alphabetum Anglicum *(1568) include dropping certain letters (*c *and* q*), replacing others by more exact graphemes (the Greek* ψ *for* ps*), and introducing new or resuscitated characters and diacritical marks (the Anglo-Saxon* þ *to indicate the sound th in "pith," the Greek* θ *to indicate* th *in "thin," whilst the diacritical circumflex, dash, and double punctum were placed superscripturally above letters to indicate length). Like Hart, Smith draws prominently on the comparison of writing with painting.* Ut pictura orthographia*—writing is a speaking picture. According to both reformers there are four main culprits of orthographic corruption: diminution (where a single letter represents a variety of sounds), "usurpation" (where an errant character replaces an accurate one, e.g.,* gh *for* f *in "tough"), superfluity (when characters are not sounded), and misplacement (the violation of a letter's proper order in a word). Mateo Alemán, in his* Castilian Orthography *(1609), similarly reverts to an older medieval scribal practice when he replaces the letter* r *with 2 ("Muɔo se corobo2a mi pa2te con lo diɔo, i ve2 qe los a2boles qe dan mas hojas i sonb2a, son los qe menos f2uto llevan" [ɔ is Alemán's solution for* ch*]).*

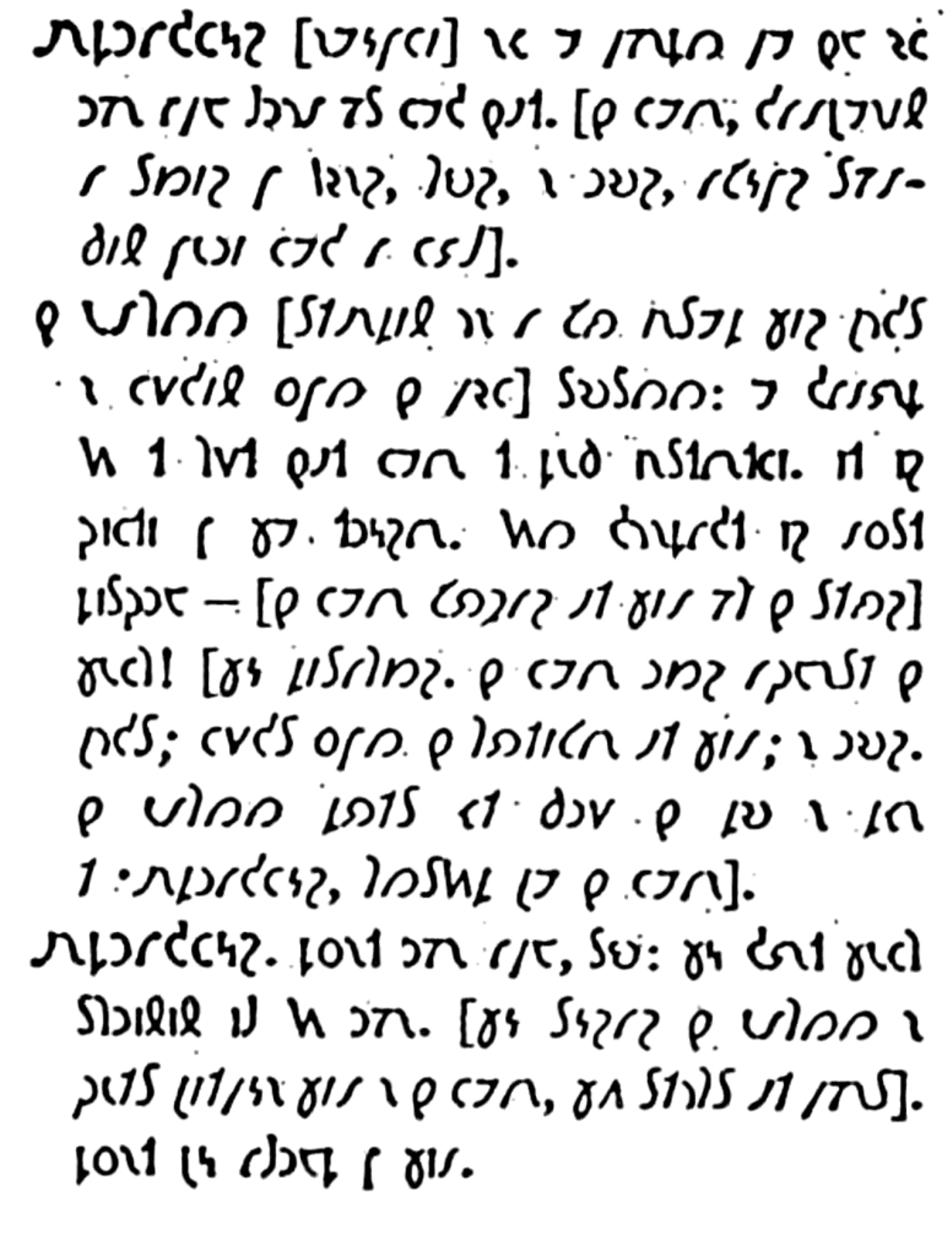
Orthographic reform is not unique to the Renaissance, however. During Roman imperial times the Emperor Claudius introduced linguistic innovations that included three new letters: an inverted F for the w/v *sound; a reversed C for the combination* ps*, and a half H for an intermediate sound between* u/i. *After the Renaissance we find William Hogarth's father Richard in his* Thesaurarium trilingue publicum *recommending an alphabet of reduced characters (dropping the letters* h, k, q, y, x, z, w, f, and g*). Benjamin Franklin's alphabet of 1768 both augments and drops characters. Remarkable in his postulates is a false theory of linguistic evolution which betrays its phonographic bias. In a letter to Mary Stevenson (transcribed in his own orthography) Franklin speaks of a regrettable movement of the English language toward an ideogrammatic state. Should "we go on as we have done a few Centuries longer, our words will gradually cease to express Sounds, they will only stand for things, as the written words do in the Chinese Language."*

Concerns for the integral beauty of revised scripts are seminal to Robert Bridges's contributions to spelling reform. Best known as laureate-author of The Testament of Beauty, *Bridges devised his own orthographic characters but succeeded no further in implementing them than the employment by Oxford University Press of some of his devices in the printing of his* Essays *in 1926. We reproduce* *below a sample of this script exemplary of Bridges's twin aims: to provide a successful solution to the spelling problems that plague the English language, and to construct an aesthetically pleasing script.*



Music when soft voices di
Vibrats in the memory –
Odurs, when swet violets sicken
Liv within the sens they quicken;
Ros-levs when the ros is ded ded
Ar hep'd for the beloved's bed:
And so thi thauts when thou art gon,
Luv itself shal slumber on.

It is George Bernard Shaw who offers the most radical program of reform, calling for a new and larger alphabet of over forty characters without diacritical or diagraphical markings. Though popularly known as the Shavian alphabet, the actual design and conception is by Kingsley Read; it is a radical departure from the Roman alphabet, reminiscent (in its deployment of ascenders, descenders, and curvatures) of the Dravidian alphabets of southern India. An illustration (from a parallel-text edition of Shaw's play Androcles and the Lion*):*



ANDROCLES [*naïvely*] Now I wonder why they all run away from us like that. [*The lion, combining a series of yawns, purrs, and roars, achieves something very like a laugh*].

THE EMPEROR [*standing on a chair inside his box and looking over the wall*] Sorcerer: I command you to put that lion to death instantly. It is guilty of high treason. Your conduct is most disgra – [*the lion charges at him up the stairs*] help! [*He disappears. The lion rears against the box; looks over the partition at him; and roars. The Emperor darts out through the door and down to Androcles, pursued by the lion*].

ANDROCLES. Dont run away, sir: he cant help springing if you run. [*He seizes the Emperor and gets between him and the lion, who stops at once*]. Dont be afraid of him.

𐑞 𐑧𐑥𐑐𐑼𐑼: 𐑲 𐑨𐑥 𐑯𐑪𐑑 𐑩𐑓𐑮𐑱𐑛 𐑝 𐑣𐑦𐑥. [𐑞 𐑤𐑲𐑩𐑯 𐑒𐑮𐑬𐑗𐑩𐑟, 𐑜𐑮𐑬𐑤𐑦𐑙. 𐑞 𐑧𐑥𐑐𐑼𐑼 𐑒𐑤𐑳𐑗𐑩𐑟 ·𐑨𐑯𐑛𐑮𐑩𐑒𐑤𐑰𐑟]. 𐑒𐑰𐑐 𐑚𐑦𐑑𐑢𐑰𐑯 𐑳𐑕.

𐑨𐑯𐑛𐑮𐑩𐑒𐑤𐑰𐑟. 𐑯𐑧𐑝𐑼 𐑚𐑰 𐑩𐑓𐑮𐑱𐑛 𐑝 𐑨𐑯𐑦𐑥𐑩𐑤𐑟, 𐑿𐑼 𐑢𐑻𐑖𐑦𐑐: 𐑞𐑨𐑑'𐑕 𐑞 𐑜𐑮𐑱𐑑 𐑕𐑰𐑒𐑮𐑩𐑑. 𐑣𐑰'𐑤 𐑚𐑰 𐑨𐑟 𐑡𐑧𐑯𐑑𐑩𐑤 𐑨𐑟 𐑩 𐑤𐑨𐑥 𐑢𐑧𐑯 𐑣𐑰 𐑯𐑴𐑟 𐑞𐑨𐑑 𐑿 𐑸 𐑣𐑦𐑟 𐑓𐑮𐑧𐑯𐑛. 𐑕𐑑𐑨𐑯𐑛 𐑒𐑢𐑲𐑑 𐑕𐑑𐑦𐑤; 𐑯 𐑕𐑥𐑲𐑤; 𐑯 𐑤𐑧𐑑 𐑣𐑦𐑥 𐑕𐑥𐑧𐑤 𐑿 𐑷𐑤 𐑴𐑝𐑼 𐑡𐑳𐑕𐑑 𐑑 𐑮𐑰𐑩𐑖𐑫𐑼 𐑣𐑦𐑥; 𐑓𐑹, 𐑿 𐑕𐑰, 𐑣𐑰'𐑟 𐑩𐑓𐑮𐑱𐑛 𐑝 𐑿; 𐑯 𐑣𐑰 𐑥𐑳𐑕𐑑 𐑦𐑜𐑟𐑨𐑥𐑦𐑯 𐑿 𐑔𐑳𐑮𐑩𐑤𐑦 𐑚𐑦𐑓𐑹 𐑣𐑰 𐑜𐑦𐑝𐑟 𐑿 𐑣𐑦𐑟 𐑒𐑪𐑯𐑓𐑦𐑛𐑩𐑯𐑕.

THE EMPEROR. I am not afraid of him. [*The lion crouches, growling. The Emperor clutches Androcles*]. Keep between us.

ANDROCLES. Never be afraid of animals, your worship: thats the great secret. He'll be as gentle as a lamb when he knows that you are his friend. Stand quite still; and smile; and let him smell you all over just to reassure him; for, you see, he's afraid of you; and he must examine you thoroughly before he gives you his confidence.

Shaw's own acknowledged genealogy of spelling reform is partial at best, ignoring all attempts before Pitman. It takes its place among a number of nineteenth- and twentieth-century invented alphabets, as tabulated by James Pitman and John St. John (see the table on next page).

The immediate advantages accruing from any of these reforms are patent. "From the scientific point of view . . . the theoretical ideal of a script is one that is able to reproduce every possible shade of sound with the greatest exactitude. . . . Only the exact investigation of the phonetic circumstances of a language makes possible also a complete understanding of its morphological phenomena, and above all of its developmental history." Why then have these commonsense reforms systematically failed to gain general acceptance? In the case of Otto Jespersen's phonetic script, which employs formulae rather than symbols, a popular resistance is hardly surprising (the sound conventionally represented by u *is written a3a b g g 3 j d o e 1 x 4).*

Through a rigorous application of "common sense," all these reforms produce unfamiliar alphabetic shapes whose contours derive from resuscitated older forms, diacritical apparatus, and, in the case of Shavian, a curious evocation of a cultural alterity. Perhaps beneath this attitude hovers a hidden fact, proposed here as conjecture. There is an anthropological preference for noise over signal, contamination over purity, the skewed and the aberrant over the perfectly matching relation, and for a certain madness over reason. Perhaps this paradoxical practicality of the impractical is best elucidated in the following passage from a letter by Shaw to Sir James Pitman. "We all know the old alphabet as we know the Lord's Prayer. To stick 17 new letters into it would be as puzzling as to stick 17 words into the Prayer. 'Give us this day our daily bread with a sufficiency of carbohydrates and a glass of beer' would be metabolically justifiable but not psychologically desirable."

It is the errancy of the capricious utterance that all these reformers seek to regulate. Understanding speech to be not the valorized guarantee of presence but the unfortunate and undesired handmaid of diachrony, spelling reform posits a Platonic ideal in which regional variations disappear. Like the Saussurean insistence on the autonomy of Language (langue), a purity of speech might be regained as a sovereign, structural ideality, preserved for all time from the clinama of speaking. But Lecercle counsels against the futility of this project: "A language does not develop, it corrupts and conserves." The dynamic pull away from stasis to kinesis is a tormented scenario of contrasting forces. Faced with the

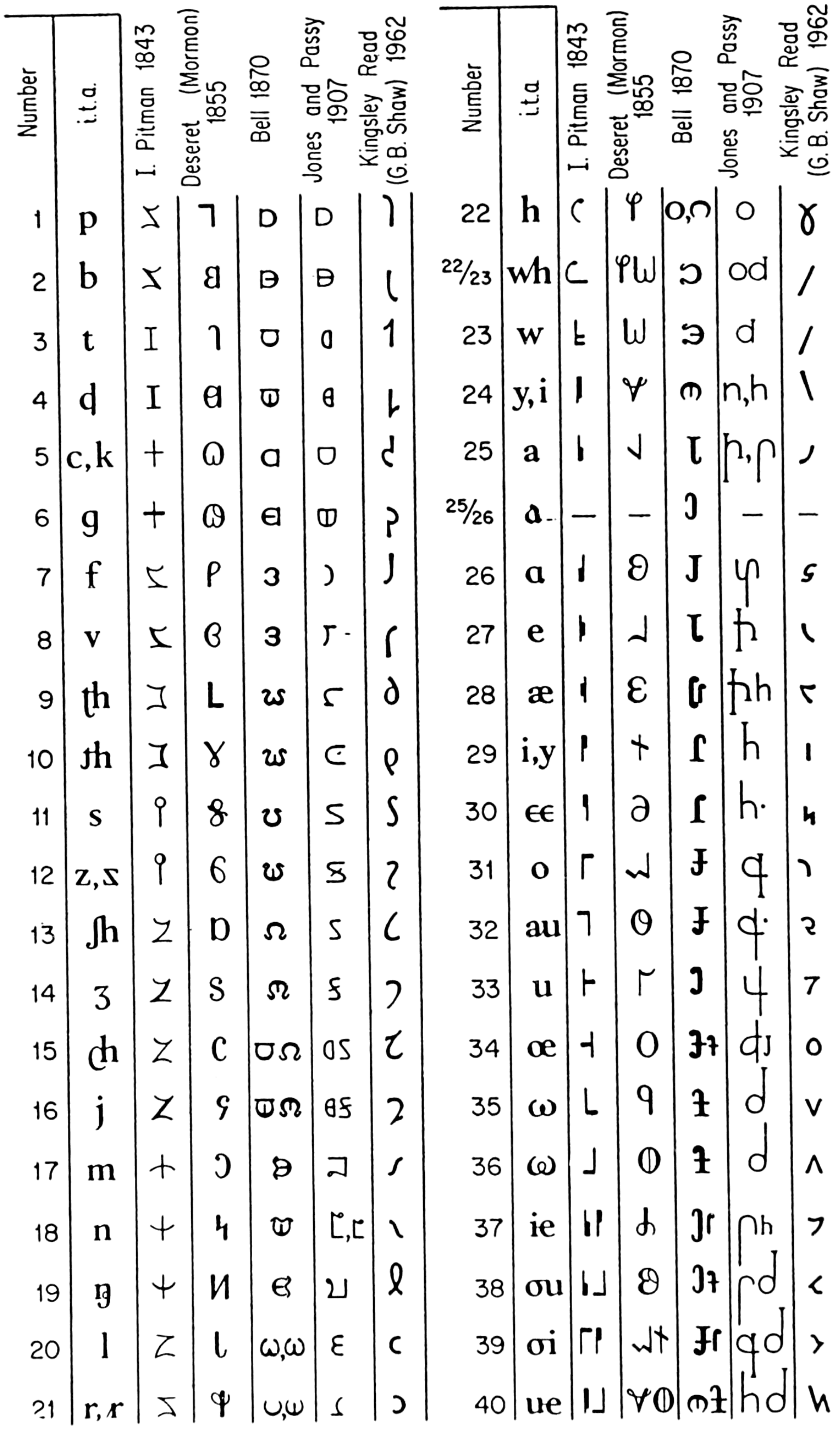

Number
i.t.a.
I. Pitman 1843
Deseret (Mormon) 1855
Bell 1870
Jones and Passy 1907
Kingsley Read (G.B. Shaw) 1962
1 p
2 b
3 t
4 d
5 c,k
6 g
7 f
8 v
9 th
10 th
11 s
12 z,z
13 ʃh
14 ʒ
15 ch
16 j
17 m
18 n
19 ŋ
20 l
21 r,r
22 h
22/23 wh
23 w
24 y,i
25 a
25/26 a
26 a
27 e
28 æ
29 i,y
30 €€
31 o
32 au
33 u
34 œ
35 ω
36 ω
37 ie
38 ou
39 oi
40 ue

Table of Non-Romanic Alphabets

fact that there is no stable language, only deviant linguistic occurrences, reformers struggled for a system of sound-sign correspondences that would be entirely free from the errant noise of parole.[1] *Such reform might finally be remembered as a futile, rational attempt to master entropic utterance. The question that arises is not who speaks but how and what is spoken, an issue located precisely at Freud's two "certain" locutionary coordinates: that* it is Language that speaks *and* I speak language. *The alphabet's response, not always in its own voice: "Ahbeesee defeegee kelomen opeecue rustyouvee double you."*

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[1] The logocentric bias in spelling reform is difficult to ignore. The paradigm of reform is that of an exhaustive realization of writing as the exact visual codification of speech. Orthographic theories and speculations are utterly dependent on speech-writing as an unproblematic, constant binary relation.

Lucian

Trial in the Court of Vowels

Archon, Aristarchus of Phalerum.
Seventh Pyanepsion.
Court of the Seven Vowels.
Action for assault with robbery.
Sigma *v.* Tau.
Plantiff's case—that the words in -ττ- are wrongfully withheld from him.

Vowels of the jury.—For some time this Mr. Tau's trespasses and encroachments on my property were of minor importance; I made no claim for damages, and affected unconsciousness of what I heard; my conciliatory temper both you and the other letters have reason to know. His covetousness and folly, however, have now so puffed him up, that he is no longer content with my habitual concessions, but insists on more; I accordingly find myself compelled to get the matter settled by you who know both sides of it. The fact is, I am in bodily fear, owing to the crushing to which I am subjected. This evergrowing aggression will end by ousting me completely from my own; I shall be almost dumb, lose my rank as a letter, and be degraded to a mere noise.

Justice requires then that not merely you, the jury in this case, but the other letters also, should be on your guard against such attempts. If any one who chooses is to be licensed to leave his own place and usurp that of others, with no objection on your part (whose concurrence is an indispensable condition of all writing), I fail to see how combinations are to have their ancient constitutional rights secured to them. But my first reliance is upon you, who will surely never be guilty of the negligence and indifference which permits injustice; and even if you decline the contest, I have no intention of sitting down under that injustice myself.

It is much to be regretted that the assaults of other letters were not repelled when they first began their lawless practices; then we should not be watching the still pending dispute between Lambda and Rho for possession of κεφαλαλγία or κεφαλαργία, κίσηλις or κίσηρις: Gamma would not have had to defend its rights over γνάφαλλα, constantly almost at blows with Kappa in the debatable land, and *per contra* it would itself have dropped its campaign against Lambda (if indeed it is more dignified than petty larceny) for converting μόλις to μόγις: in fact lawless confusion generally would have been nipped in the bud. And it is well to abide by the established order; such trespasses betray a revolutionary spirit.

Now our first legislators—Cadmus the islander, Palamedes, son of Nauplius, or Simonides, whom some authorities credit with the measure—were not satisfied with determining merely our order of precedence in the alphabet; they also had an eye to our individual qualities and faculties. You, Vowels of the jury, constitute the first Estate, because you can be uttered independently; the semi-vowels, requiring support before they can be distinctly heard, are the second; and the lowest Estate they declared to consist of those nine which cannot be sounded at all by themselves. The vowels are accordingly the natural guardians of our laws.

But this—this Tau—I would give him a worse designation, but that is a manifest impossibility; for without the assistance of two good presentable members of your Estate, Alpha and Upsilon, he would be a mere nonentity—he it is that has dared to outdo all injuries that I have ever known, expelling me from the nouns and verbs of my inheritance, and hunting me out of my conjunctions and prepositions, till his rapacity has become quite unbearable. I am now to trace proceedings from the beginning.

I was once staying at Cybelus, a pleasant little town, said to be an Athenian colony; my travelling companion was the excellent Rho, best of neighbours. My host was a writer of comedies, called Lysimachus; he seems to have been a Boeotian by descent, though he represented himself as coming from the interior of Attica. It was while with him that I first detected Tau's depredations. For some earlier occasional attempts (as when he took to τετταράκοντα for τεσσαράκοντα, τήμερον for σήμερον, with little pilferings of that sort) I had explained as a trick and peculiarity of pronunciation; I had tolerated the sound without letting it annoy me seriously.

But impunity emboldened him; κασσίτερος became καττίτερος, κάσσυμα and πίσσα shared its fate; and then he cast off all shame and assaulted βασίλισσα. I found myself losing the society in which I had been born and bred; at such a time equanimity is out of place; I am tortured with apprehension; how long will it be before σῦκα is τῦκα? Bear with me, I beseech you; I despair and have none to help me; do I not well to be angry? It is no petty everyday peril, this threatened separation from my long-tried familiars. My κίσσα, my talking bird that nestled in my breast, he has torn away and named anew; my φάσσα, my νῆσσαι, my κόσσυφοι—all gone; and I had Aristarchus's own word that they were mine; half my μέλισσαι he has lured to strange hives; Attica itself he has invaded, and wrongfully annexed its Hymettus (as he calls it); and you and the rest looked on at the seizure.

But why dwell on such trifles? I am driven from all Thessaly (Thettaly, forsooth!), θάλασσα is now *mare clausum* to me; he will not leave me a poor garden-herb like σεύτλιον, I have never a πάσσαλος to hang myself upon. What a long-suffering letter I am myself, your own knowledge is witness enough. When Zeta stole my σμάραγδος, and robbed me of all Smyrna, I never took proceedings against him; Xi might break all συνθῆκαι, and appeal to Thucydides (who ought to know) as xympathizing with his xystem; I let them alone. My neighbour Rho I made no difficulty about pardoning as an invalid, when he transplanted my μυρσίναι into his garden, or, in a fit of the spleen, took liberties with my κόρση. So much for my temper.

Tau's, on the other hand, is naturally violent; its manifestations are not confined to me. In proof that he has not spared other letters, but assaulted Delta, Theta, Zeta, and almost the whole alphabet, I wish his various victims to be put in the box. Now, Vowels of the jury, mark the evidence of Delta:—'He robbed me of ἐνδελέχεια, which he claimed, quite illegally, as ἐντελέχεια.' Mark Theta beating his breast and plucking out his hair in grief for the loss of κολοκύνθη. And Zeta mourns for συρίζειν and σαλπίζειν—nay, *cannot* mourn, for lack of his γρύζειν. What tolerance is possible, what penalty adequate, for this criminal letter's iniquities?

But his wrongs are not even limited to us, his own species; he has now extended his operations to mankind, as I shall show. He does not permit their tongues to work straight. (But that mention of mankind calls me back for a moment, reminding me how he turns γλῶσσα into γλῶττα, half robbing me of the tongue itself. Ay, you are a disease of the tongue in every sense, Tau.) But I return from that digression, to plead the cause of mankind and its wrongs. The prisoner's designs include the constraint, racking, and mutilation of their utterance. A man sees a beautiful thing, and wishes to describe it as καλόν, but in comes Tau, and forces the man to say ταλόν: *he* must have precedence everywhere, of course. Another man has something to say about a vine, and lo, before it is out, it is metamorphosed by this miserable creature into misery; he has changed κλῆμα to τλῆμα, with a suggestive hint of τλήμων. And, not content with the middle-class victims, he aims at the Persian king himself, the one for whom land and sea are said to have made way and changed their nature: Cyrus comes out at his bidding as Tyrus.

Such are his verbal offences against man; his offences in deed remain. Men weep, and bewail their lot, and curse Cadmus with many curses for introducing Tau into the family of letters; they say it was his body that tyrants took for a model, his shape that they imitated, when they set up the erections on which men are crucified. Σταυρός the vile engine is called, and it derives its vile name from him. Now, with all these crimes upon him, does he not deserve death, nay, many deaths? For my part I know none bad enough but that supplied by his own shape—that shape which he gave to the gibbet named σταυρός after him by men.

Translated by H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler

Jonathan Swift

A Litteralial Scheme of Writing

SIR,

As you are a famous instructor of youth in the learned languages, I cannot doubt of your being willing to encourage all *useful inventions,* that may further improve knowledge. I have often lamented the unnecessary loss of time we suffer in transcribing our thought by dividing our words into syllables, and writing the vowels at length, which so frequently occur, that, although they be but five, yet, by occurring so frequently as they do, double our labour: besides the great loss of paper, pens, and ink, which many among the learned are not so well able to spare.

I confess, that, in this polite and learned age of ours, many laudable attempts have been made for some remedy against this evil; partly by abbreviating words with apostrophes; and partly by lopping the polysyllables, leaving only one or two at most; as thus. Tis'n't, 't'nt, won't, can't, 'pon, rep', phis', and more. But, alas! these are poor expedients, and do not go to the root of the disease.

My scheme is much more useful and extensive. Although I confess myself not to be altogether the original inventor. For, I observe, that the ingenious gentlemen, who play at *White's* chocolate-house, have some imperfect idea of it; and I have seen some instances of it many years older, but very imperfect. By these examples, I have, these nine years past, been considering the force of letters in our alphabet with relation to each other; as school-mistresses teach young children to pronounce them in their horn-books, which is in this manner, A, Be or Bee, See, Dee, E, Ef, Gee, Each *or* Ach, I *or* Eye, Ka *or* Key, El, Em, En, O, Pee *or* Pe, Qu *or* Cue, Are *or* Err, Ess, Tee *or* Tea, U *or* You, Double U *or* Double You, Ex, Wy, Izzard. Now this, I say the very gaming lords at the chocolate-houses have already some imperfect notion of, as far as concerns the vowels. The same thing also men of business are not ignorant of, for thus three vowels shall stand, with the sum affixed, for a good promissory note, I O U 20 £.

In short, you need only read the letters as they are pronounced by boys and girls, when they are taught first to read, as A, Bee, Cee; and six letters shall go as far as ten. This is only for dispatch in writing; of which take the following specimens. But I have materials for a treatise to contract words in speaking, which, as this finds encouragement, I shall publish afterwards.

A letter to your mistress.

Dr ln ur a but; I stm u a dit. Ur mpr ndurs. O b ur but endls. A dr faces ur but. Ur a gm; a gul; a rub. I c a b p q ur i: I b c h u t k a r o ur i, I c q u r a med. U r etn; ur y. U r aprs. I c a pr b for u. I dsr ur pt, ur gnroset; ur prspquit; dene, enerit, fablit, ur xlnes apr. Ur a qrioet. Ritr nobls ur log. Ur a qn ma. Ur but dfis apls a putr. I c ur but pres ur nmi.

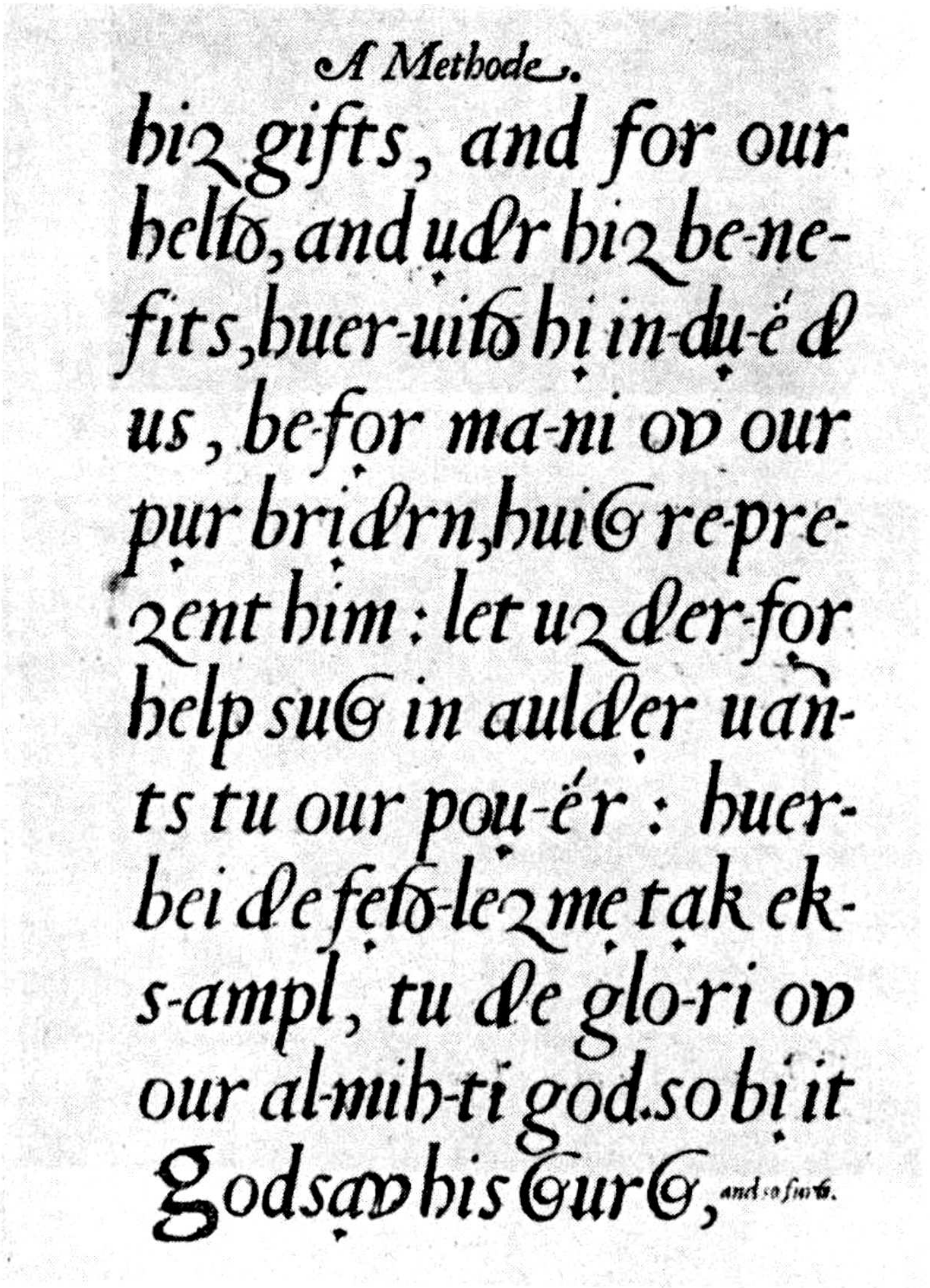
Another letter in the litteralia style.

Bt, ur nt; u dsil ur krks dli. I c ur a grr. I ph u. I aqq u. Ur nmii aqq u. Mli aqqs u. Qpd d si i u. U r r mps. U th kt. O g m ni! u a thr. u th a br. Ur ri. I d si u. I sk p u. I sq u. I k tqis u. U a but. Ur rc a but. U rsmbl ur ldr estr kt on. I rmmbr dr Ptr. On Sqr. B guptr I cur gloc: Q ep ur tmpr.

John Hart

*Hart has been credited with publishing "the first bit of connected discourse written phonetically." His proposals toward a rational reform along phonetic lines include the omission of three letters (*y, w, *and* c, *along with the silent* e*); the addition of six new characters or marks, one resembling a written* z *representing consonantal* i; *a looped* c *for "ch", a* Δ *for vocalic* l, *and a subscript dot beneath vowels to indicate length. Hart also recommends abandoning capital letters on the ground that, despite their formal and visual difference, they denote identical sounds.*

Augmented Characters



A Methode.

hiʒ gifts, and for our
helθ, and uðr hiʒ be-ne-
fits, huer-uiθ hị in-dụ-é ð
us, be-fọr ma-ni ov our
pụr brịðrn, huiç re-pre-
ʒent him: let uʒ ðer-fọr
help suç in aulðẹr uan-
ts tu our pọu-ér: huer-
bei ðe fẹθ-leʒ mẹ tạk ek-
s-ampl, tu ðe glo-ri ov
our al-mih-ti god. so bị it
god sạv his çurç, and so furth.

Thomas Whythorne

Apart from credit for publishing the earliest extant book of English madrigals in 1571, Whythorne remained unknown until a manuscript appeared for auction at Sotheby's in 1955. It was in this document, the earliest autobiography in the English language, that Whythorne presented his "new orthografye." Beginning as a servingman, he rose to be master of music for the Archbishop of Canterbury. Unlike Hart, Bullokar, and Gil, Whythorne was not a theoretician of phonetic spelling. The "new orthografye" is based largely on Hart but with important variations. (For instance, vowels are marked with a subscript dot, and Hart's use of v *for* f *in "of" and* c *for "k" are rejected.) Whythorne's actual application of his system in the manuscript is frequently inconsistent, even to the point of reverting back to conventional spelling at times.*

New Orthografye

But or ever I do comen to the ⟨body⟩ of my purpose I will shew yow an *Orthografye* with the whi⟨ch I choose⟩ to wryte this discoors folloing, becaws I do fynd more reason in ⟨it tha⟩n in that which is now commenlye vsed. I did read the book of the Or⟨th⟩ografye that is sett owt by .J. hart, Chester heralt, whose order for the vse of the doble vowell, I do lyke better then Sir John Cheeks in his letter written to mr hobbye in the book named the Coortier, wher hee doth doble the vowell to make A wurd sownd long withowt the setting of the .e. at the last end of the wurd. As for example, wheras heer tofore ⟨we d⟩id vse to wryte these words tyme, and same thus. Tyme. Same. setting ⟨the .e⟩. at the end of the wurd to make it long. Mr Cheeke doth vse it in his ⟨affor⟩sayd letter thus. Tijm. Saam. dobling of the vowell to make the wurd ⟨long⟩, & leaving owt the .e. at the end of those wurds. but the sayd mr harte, ⟨doth⟩ dobl⟨e⟩ the vowell by setting A prick under it as thus. Tịm. Sạm. and ⟨thus⟩ the rest of the vowels in the same case. but seing that the Greek vowell ⟨calle⟩d *ypsilon,* which is thus made .*y*⟨. the which ye⟩ may see in the book ⟨named⟩ *A testimoni of antiquite &c* ⟨wher it is made⟩ thus .ẏ. with A prick over the hed ⟨the⟩rof. ⟨In place of Sir John Che⟩eks .ij. ⟨or mr⟩ harts .ị. I do and ⟨will⟩ v⟨s⟩e tha⟨t .ẏ. b⟩ecaws that in althings that be ⟨reas⟩nable and good, I h⟨ad⟩ rather vse the olde maner then any new. lykewyse wheras the sayd mr hart doth leav owt the .g. in this word myght as thus .myht. And As he doth vse the old Saxon .3. for .g. in this name. George, as thus .3eorȝ. so do I vse them, and all wurds lẏke vnto them. But wheras hee doth invent new letters or carects of his own devyse, and leaveth owt certayn letters which have byn auntientlye vsed, and may be well vsed still (as I do think) I do not, nor wilnot follow his order in that sort. Neyther will I vse the .h. before the .w. as he doth in this word .which. as thus .huich. neyther the letter .v. for the letter .f. in this wurd .of. as thus .ov. neyther .ei. for .i. and such lyke. ⌜Also wheras he doth wryte midl⟨e⟩. ridle. fidle. and such lyke words thus. midꝉ. ridꝉ. fidꝉ. sidꝉ. making A new carect or letter for the .le. at the latter end of evry of those words. the which is very lyke the .3. that hee dot⟨h vse.⟩ therfor I will set for the .le. the letter .l. only, seing that the sownd that it standeth for is ⟨but⟩ an absurd sownd to be wretten. for as I said before in things reasnable I had rather v⟨se⟩ the awntient order then any newe.⌉

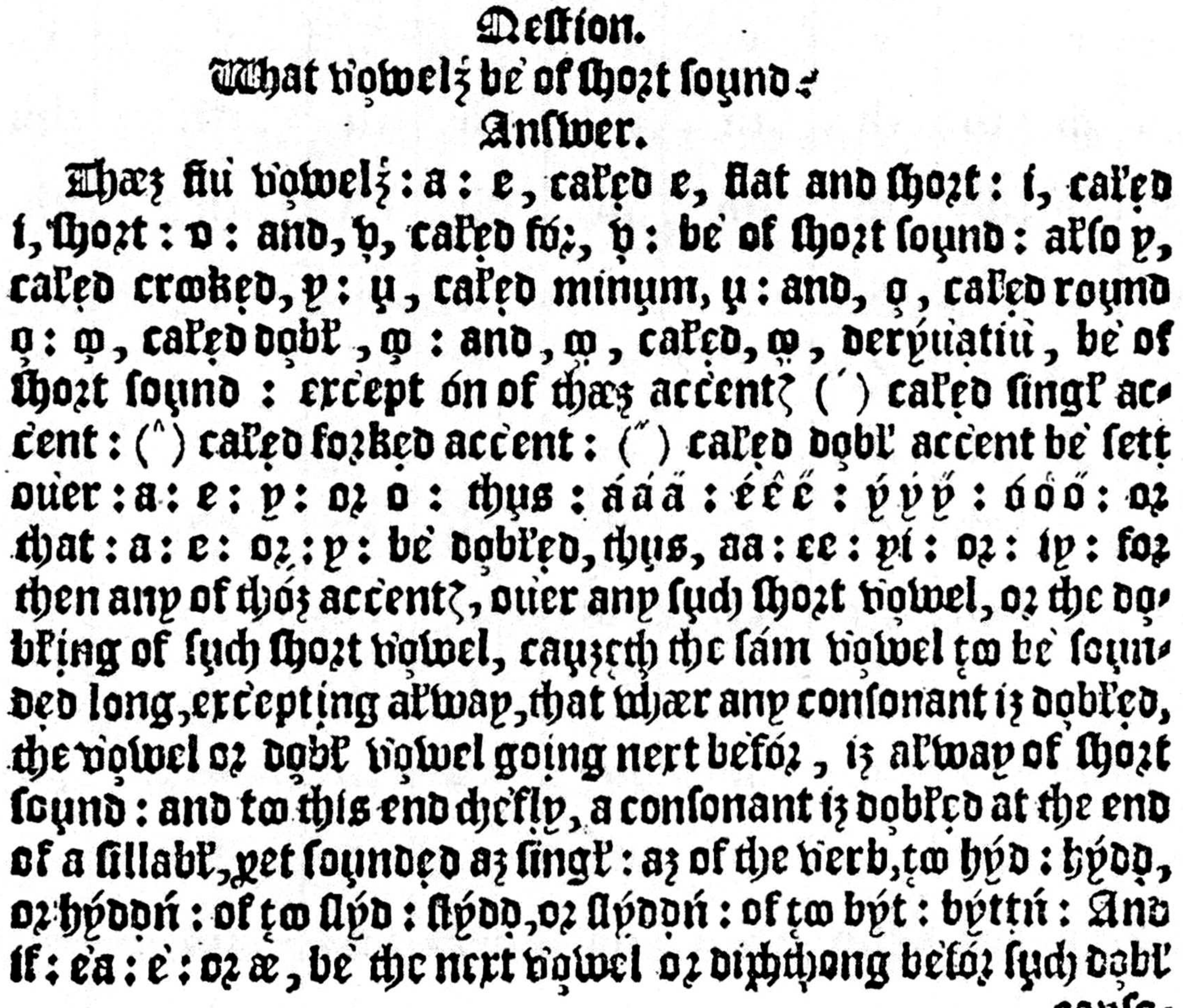
Also I ⌈will⌉ wryte wurds as they be sownded in speech, as in *Jesus. Jelosy. p⟨re⟩*served. those. as. and such lyke words. wheras I ⌈will⌉ wryte them thus. Ȝ*ezus*⟨.⟩ Ȝelozy. prezerved. thoz. az. &c. Also these wurds. *Thus. This. That.* ⟨and⟩ such lyke. I ⌈will⌉ wryte with the auntient carects, named the .Thorn. ⟨as thus.⟩Đus. Đis. Đat. or ells thus. þus. þis. þat. Also these wurds ⟨ . . . ⟩ *Thin. Thorn.* and such lyke I will wryte with the .Th. or .th. ⟨as they are⟩ commenly accustomed to be written. Also these words. *Noble. Able.* ⟨*Treble.*⟩ and such lyke. I will wryte as thus. *Nobull. Abull. Treb⟨ull.⟩* And also such wurds as wee do take owt of other langwages ⟨whereof⟩ Sir John Cheek, and dyvers other great learned men be of the opinion ⟨that⟩ when wee do take and vse them as English words, we shuld wryte th⟨em⟩ as wee do speak them, in such sort as wee do all other English words.

. . .

Tạk heed of ⟨w⟩or⟨d⟩z þow ⟨ma⟩ist no⟨t⟩ vowch
not spọk, for þem þ'art free alway,
  from word and deed.
But said, þei do þee rewl, and towch
þy siur estạt, wherfọr I say
  of wordz tạk heed.

Befọr þat wordz be spoken, þe spẹker of þem hath þem at hiz own will to rew⟨l⟩ but if þey be ọns spọken befọr witnes, þen iz hee no mọr þe master of þem, bu⟨t⟩ even az þei bee when þei bee vttered, so do þei work in word or deed vnto þe spea⟨ker⟩ be it good or evell. and no ọn sort of peopull, hạv mọr need to tạk heed of þis e⟨vell⟩ þen drunkardz, for when þey hạv lost þe maestry of þem selvs by drunkennes ⟨þen⟩ do þeir heedles toongs babbull owt þe abowndans of þeir harts, and sumtẏm þey know not what þem selvs. þe which vẏs of drunkennes I perseyved to rain azwe⟨ll⟩ in Germany, and hye Almạn az in þe low Duchland, for when I had remain⟨ed⟩ my half A yeer in the low Duchland, þen travelled I thorow Germany and hy⟨e⟩ Alman into Italy. And whẏll I waz in þọz kuntreiz I being sumwhat moleste⟨d⟩ & trobled with drunkars þạr, bekawz I wold not drink karows and all owt when þ⟨ey⟩ wold hạv had mee az þey did, I waz in sum dainȝer þerfọr. for þe which I wrọt ⟨þus⟩—

Who þat to quassing iz bent, and to drink þe rạt
þat dạm nạtiur (þe nurs of helth) hath þem forbod
þe maestri of þem seluz þei looz, þeir strength doth
  so abat
besẏd þeir wurs reward, which iz þe wrath of God.



Qeſtion.

What vowelz be of ſhort ſound?

Anſwer.

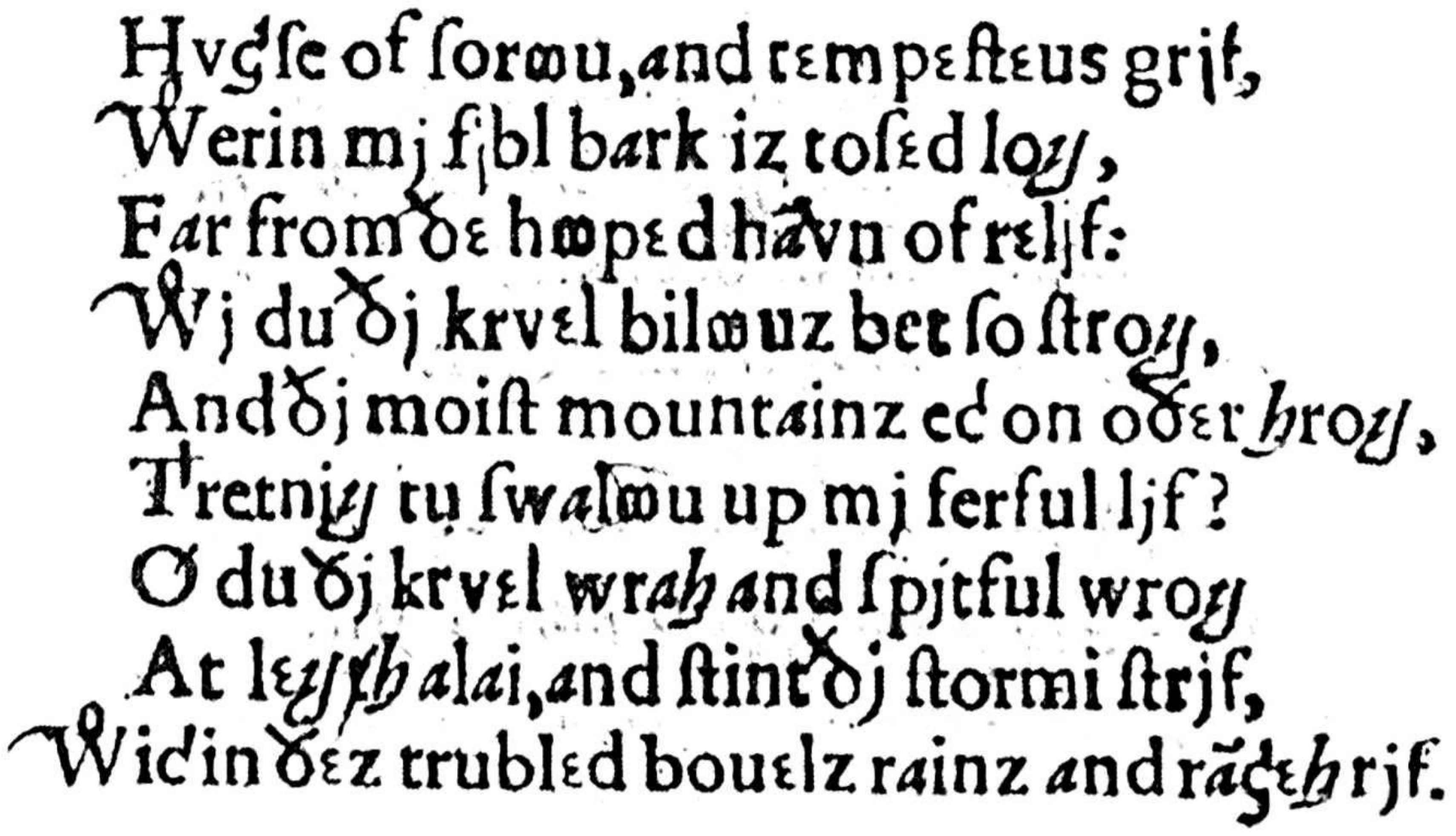
Thæz fiu vowelz: a: e, caled e, flat and ſhort: i, caled i, ſhort: o: and, v, caled fór, v: be of ſhort ſound: alſo y, caled crooked, y: u, caled minum, u: and, o, caled round o: ω, caled dobl', ω: and, ω, caled, ω, deryuatiu, be of ſhort ſound: except ón of thæz accentz (´) caled ſingl' accent: (^) caled forked accent: (˝) caled dobl' accent be ſett ouer: a: e: y: or o: thus: á â a̋: é ê e̋: ý ŷ y̋: ó ô ő: or that: a: e: or: y: be dobled, thus, aa: ee: yi: or: iy: for then any of thóz accentz, ouer any ſuch ſhort vowel, or the dobling of ſuch ſhort vowel, cauzeth the ſám vowel too be ſounded long, excepting alway, that whær any conſonant iz dobled, the vowel or dobl' vowel going next befór, iz alway of ſhort ſound: and too this end chéfly, a conſonant iz dobled at the end of a ſillabl', yet ſounded az ſingl': az of the verb, too hýd: hýdd, or hýddn: of too ſlýd: ſlýdd, or ſlýddn: of too být: býttn: And if: ea: e: or æ, be the next vowel or diphthong befór ſuch dobl' conſo-

Alexander Gil

Gil was High Master of St. Paul's School during Milton's years there. He was interested in, and knowledgeable about, the Kaballah. Logonomia anglica *is among other things a treatise on linguistic patriotism that foregrounds Spenser's "Puritan" poetry as exemplary. Gil considers Anglo-Saxon characters superior to their Latin counterparts in both polish and elegance, and argues for their reintroduction into the English alphabet. Relevant to this transcription of the* Faerie Queene *is Gil's belief that poets should adopt a northern English dialect, as its proximity to Saxon renders it the most pleasant and pure. Gil's orthography below corresponds to the following stanzas from Spenser's poem (Book III, Canto IV, viii):*

Huge sea of sorrow, and tempestuous griefe,
Wherein my feeble barke is tossed long,
Far from the hoped hauen of reliefe,
Why do thy cruell billowes beat so strong,
And thy moyst mountaines each on others throng,
Threatning to swallow vp my fearefull life?
O do thy cruell wrath and spightfull wrong
At length allay, and stint thy stormy strife,
Which in these troubled bowels raignes, and rageth rife.

Phonetic Version of Spenser's Faerie Queene

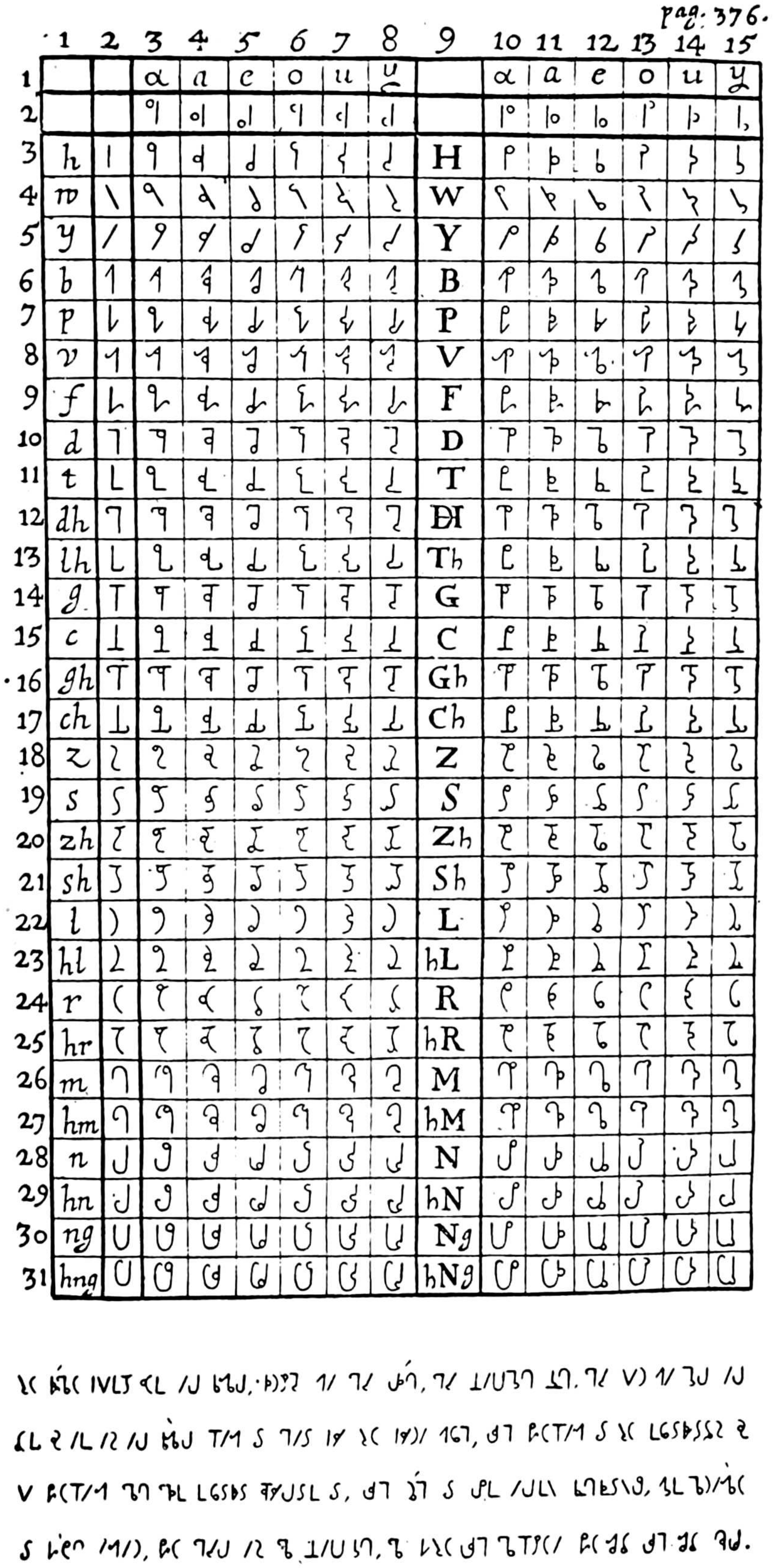


Hvǵ ſe of ſorꝏu, and tɛmpɛſtɛus grjf,
Werin mj fjbl bark iz toſɛd loŋ,
Far from ðɛ hꝏpɛd hāvn of rɛljf:
Wj du ðj krvɛl bilꝏuz bɛt ſo ſtroŋ,
And ðj moiſt mountainz eć on oðɛr *h*roŋ,
Trɛtniŋ tu ſwalꝏu up mj ferful ljf?
O du ðj krvɛl wra*h* and ſpjtful wroŋ
At lɛŋ*th* alai, and ſtint ðj ſtormi ſtrjf,
Wić in ðɛz trublɛd bouɛlz rainz and rāǵɛ*h* rjf.

John Wilkins

The Somatic Production of Sounds

In this diagram by John Wilkins, graphic shapes reflect the mutation of vowels as they come in contact with consonants—Wilkins's concern being to adapt writing to "the material circumstances" giving rise to speech, on the premise that "words are what the mouth molds, not what the mind conceives."


pag: 376.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15
α a e o u y α a e o u y
h w y b p v f d t dh th g c gh ch z s zh sh l hl r hr m hm n hn ng hng
H W Y B P V F D T Đ Th G C Gh Ch Z S Zh Sh L hL R hR M hM N hN Ng hNg

Charles de Brosses

De Brosses's "organic alphabet" is less an alphabet than a supplementary schema of diagrams (of lips, throat, teeth, palate, tongue, and nose) that notate strict phonic analyses. The Cratylian basis for de Brosses's organic alphabet, structured on oral mimesis, is evident in his contention that the choice of articulation is "physically determined by the nature and by the quality of the object itself, so as to depict, as much as possible, the object as it really is; without this, the word would not yield any idea of the object." Rejecting conventionalist theories, he grounds his analysis of spoken language in a strict logic of physiology, arguing that a close bonding of the latter to a written form would result in a more perfect alphabet. The organic alphabet merits comparison with van Helmont's articulatory analysis of Hebrew characters (see "Transpositions," p. 231 above), and with Alexander Melville Bell's 1867 attempt to base an alphabet entirely on the physiology of the speaking organs (p. 463).

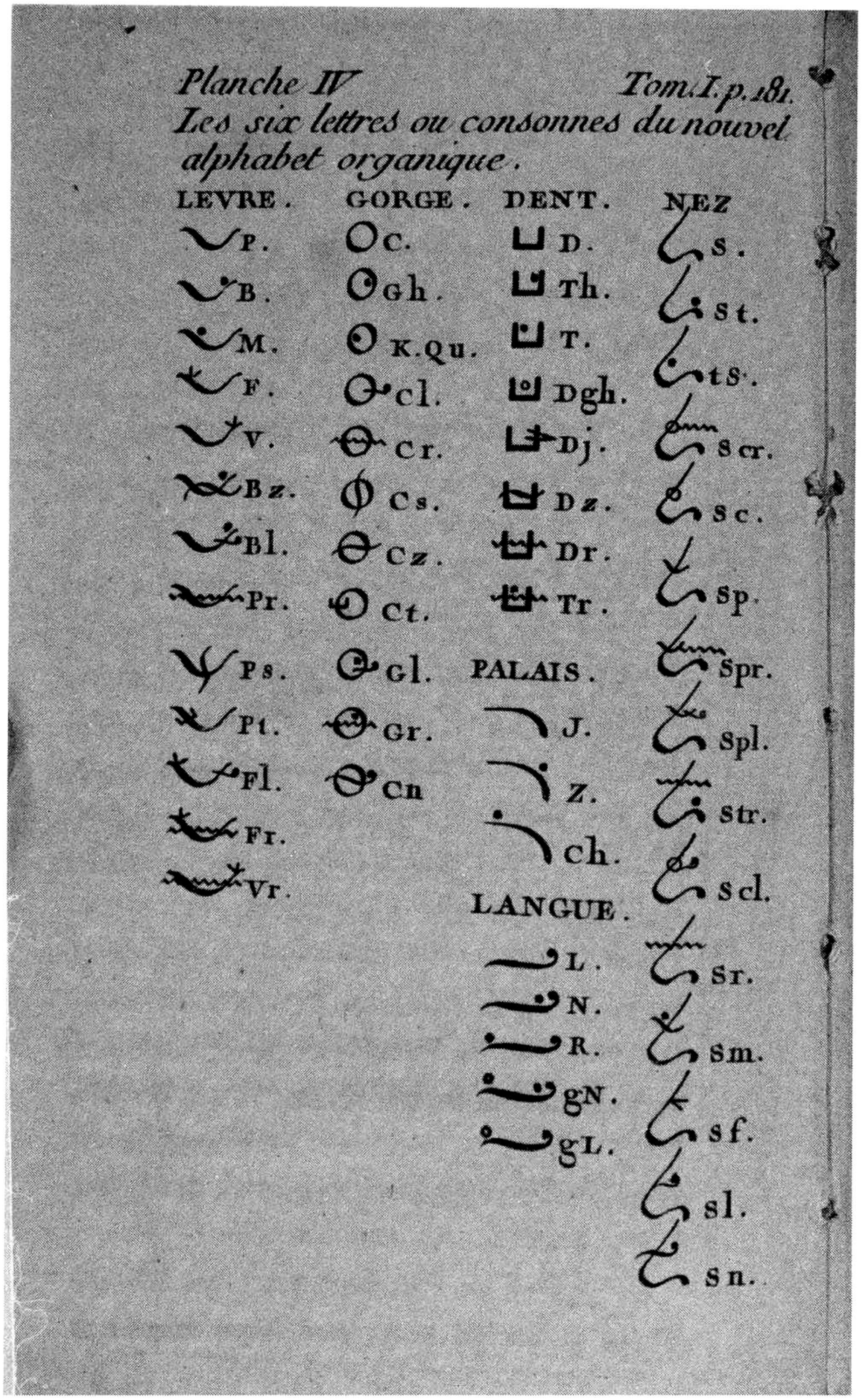


Planche IV Tom. I. p. 181.

Les six lettres ou consonnes du nouvel alphabet organique.

LEVRE.
P.
B.
M.
F.
V.
Bz.
Bl.
Pr.
Ps.
Pt.
Fl.
Fr.
Vr.

GORGE.
C.
Gh.
K.Qu.
cl.
Cr.
Cs.
Cz.
Ct.
Gl.
Gr.
Cn

DENT.
D.
Th.
T.
Dgh.
Dj.
Dz.
Dr.
Tr.

PALAIS.
J.
Z.
ch.

LANGUE.
L.
N.
R.
gN.
gL.

NEZ
S.
St.
tS.
Scr.
Sc.
Sp.
Spr.
Spl.
Str.
Scl.
Sr.
Sm.
Sf.
sl.
Sn.

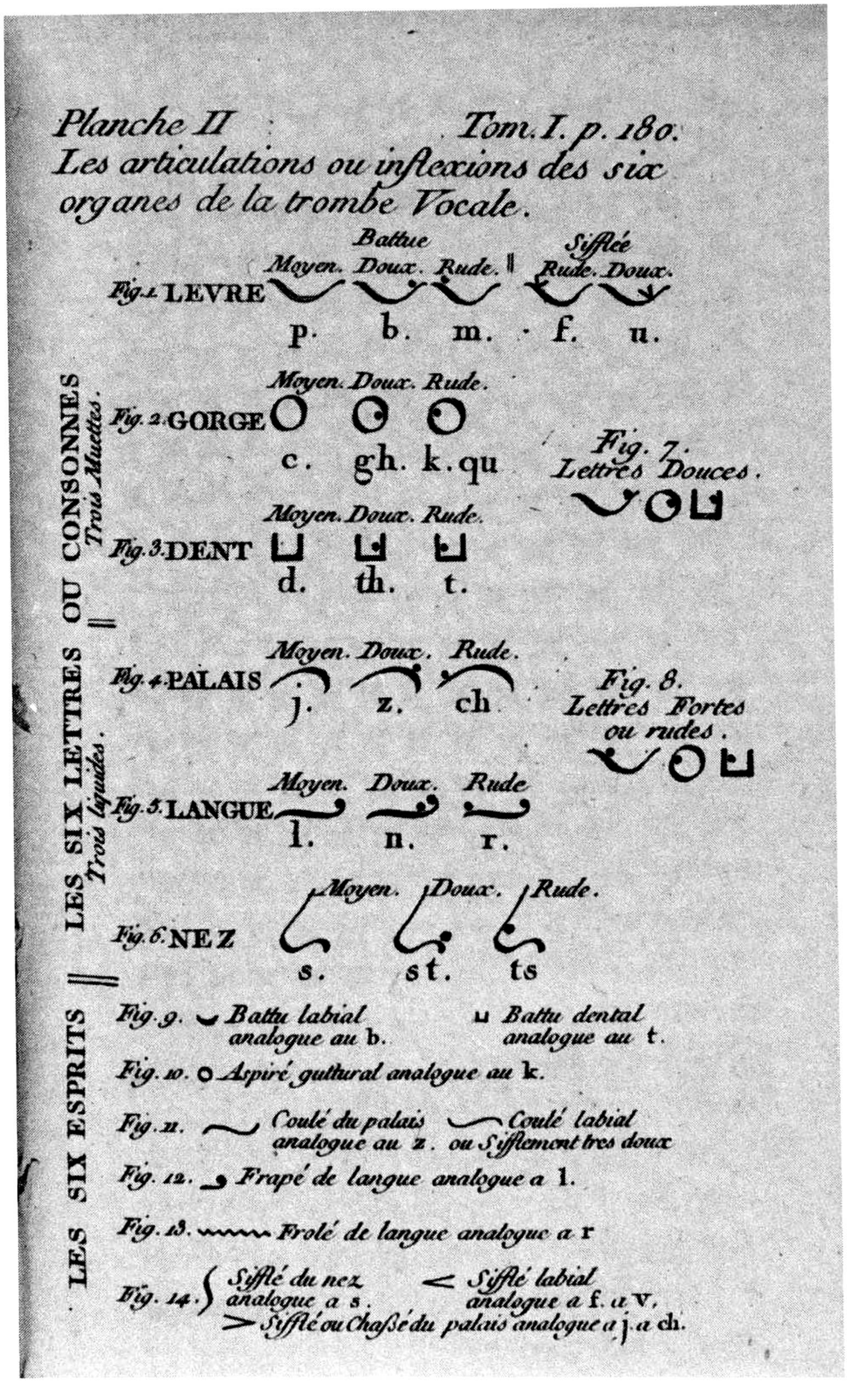


Planche II *Tom. I. p. 180.*

Les articulations ou inflexions des six organes de la trombe Vocale.

LES SIX LETTRES OU CONSONNES

Trois Muettes.

Fig. 1. **LEVRE** — *Battue*: *Moyen.* p. *Doux.* b. *Rude.* m. ‖ *Sifflée*: *Rude.* f. *Doux.* u.

Fig. 2. **GORGE** — *Moyen.* c. *Doux.* gh. *Rude.* k. qu

Fig. 3. **DENT** — *Moyen.* d. *Doux.* th. *Rude.* t.

Fig. 7. Lettres Douces.

Trois liquides.

Fig. 4. **PALAIS** — *Moyen.* j. *Doux.* z. *Rude.* ch

Fig. 8. Lettres Fortes ou rudes.

Fig. 5. **LANGUE** — *Moyen.* l. *Doux.* n. *Rude* r.

Fig. 6. **NEZ** — *Moyen.* s. *Doux.* st. *Rude.* ts

LES SIX ESPRITS

Fig. 9. *Battu labial analogue au* b. — *Battu dental analogue au* t.

Fig. 10. *Aspiré guttural analogue au* k.

Fig. 11. *Coulé du palais analogue au* z. — *Coulé labial ou Sifflement tres doux*

Fig. 12. *Frapé de langue analogue a* l.

Fig. 13. *Frolé de langue analogue a* r

Fig. 14. *Sifflé du nez analogue a* s. — < *Sifflé labial analogue a* f. *a* V.

> *Sifflé ou Chaſsé du palais analogue a* j. *a* ch.

Sequoyah (George Guess)

Sequoyah invented a syllabary for Cherokee in 1821, after eight years of experiment, including an attempt at hieroglyphics. None of the North American Indian nations had a written language at that point. Many (including his wife) thought he was engaged in sorcery; but Sequoyah was motivated by a separatist nationalism, convinced that tribal values were being eroded because the traditional oral mode of conservation had become porous to the encroaching white society. (In fact, nearly a quarter of the Cherokee nation had become so acculturated by the 1820s that they knew only English.) Most fascinating is that Sequoyah neither spoke nor read English. His use of the English alphabet was a canny act of cultural power, since its astonishing success in the Cherokee community forced the missionaries to abandon conventional literacy programs and adopt Sequoyah's syllabary. Ironically, it was not used to preserve Cherokee heritage as its inventor intended, but to translate the Bible and promote Christianization. In 1822 a disappointed Sequoyah spurned the assimilationist program and migrated west. Because he did not know English, Sequoyah's appropriation of the alphabet redeploys the letters in ways that are entirely arbitrary with respect to English or European pronunciation. Using the letters primarily as visual designs, he added a considerable number of variants to bring the total to 85, corresponding with the basic sound-shape of the Cherokee tongue.

CHEROKEE ALPHABET.

CHARACTERS AS ARRANGED BY THE INVENTOR.

Ꭱ Ꭰ Ꮃ Ꮵ Ꮐ Ꮽ Ꮺ Ꮅ Ꮑ Ꮌ Ꭹ Ᏹ Ꮟ Ꮲ Ꭳ Ꮇ Ꮄ Ꭽ Ꮼ
Ꮰ Ꮤ Ᏼ Ꮈ Ꭿ Ꮝ Ᏺ Ꮁ Ꭺ Ꮷ Ꮍ Ꮞ Ꮠ Ꮆ Ꮘ Ꮗ Ꮜ Ꮖ Ꮓ Ꭷ
Ꮸ Ꮢ Ꮒ Ꭶ Ꮩ Ꭸ Ꮣ Ꭼ Ꮻ Ꭲ Ꭴ Ᏸ Ꮂ Ꮫ Ꭻ Ꮶ Ꮙ Ꮔ Ꮎ Ꮳ
Ᏻ Ꮴ Ꮧ Ꮾ Ꮪ Ꮥ Ꮯ Ꭵ Ꮕ Ꮦ Ꮉ Ꮡ Ꮱ Ꭾ Ꮀ Ꮋ Ꮭ Ꮿ Ꮹ Ꮨ
Ꮮ Ꮏ Ꮚ Ꮬ Ꮊ Ꮛ

CHARACTERS SYSTEMATICALLY ARRANGED WITH THE SOUNDS.

Ꭰ a	Ꭱ e	Ꭲ i	Ꭳ o	Ꭴ u	Ꭵ v
Ꭶ ga Ꭷ ka	Ꭸ ge	Ꭹ gi	Ꭺ go	Ꭻ gu	Ꭼ gv
Ꭽ ha	Ꭾ he	Ꭿ hi	Ꮀ ho	Ꮁ hu	Ꮂ hv
Ꮃ la	Ꮄ le	Ꮅ li	Ꮆ lo	Ꮇ lu	Ꮈ lv
Ꮉ ma	Ꮊ me	Ꮋ mi	Ꮌ mo	Ꮍ mu	
Ꮎ na Ꮏ hna Ꮐ nah	Ꮑ ne	Ꮒ ni	Ꮓ no	Ꮔ nu	Ꮕ nv
Ꮖ qua	Ꮗ que	Ꮘ qui	Ꮙ quo	Ꮚ quu	Ꮛ quv
Ꮝ s Ꮜ sa	Ꮞ se	Ꮟ si	Ꮠ so	Ꮡ su	Ꮢ sv
Ꮣ da Ꮤ ta	Ꮥ de Ꮦ te	Ꮧ di Ꮨ tih	Ꮩ do	Ꮪ du	Ꮫ dv
Ꮬ dla Ꮭ tla	Ꮮ tle	Ꮯ tli	Ꮰ tlo	Ꮱ tlu	Ꮲ tlv
Ꮳ tsa	Ꮴ tse	Ꮵ tsi	Ꮶ tso	Ꮷ tsu	Ꮸ tsv
Ꮹ wa	Ꮺ we	Ꮻ wi	Ꮼ wo	Ꮽ wu	Ꮾ wv
Ꮿ ya	Ᏸ ye	Ᏹ yi	Ᏺ yo	Ᏻ yu	Ᏼ yv

SOUNDS REPRESENTED BY VOWELS.

a as *a* in *father*, or short as *a* in *rival*.
e as *a* in *hate*, or short as *e* in *met*,
i as *i* in *pique*, or short as *i* in *pit*,
o as *aw* in *law*, or short as *o* in *not*,
u as *oo* in *fool*, or short as *u* in *pull*,
v as *u* in *but* nasalized.

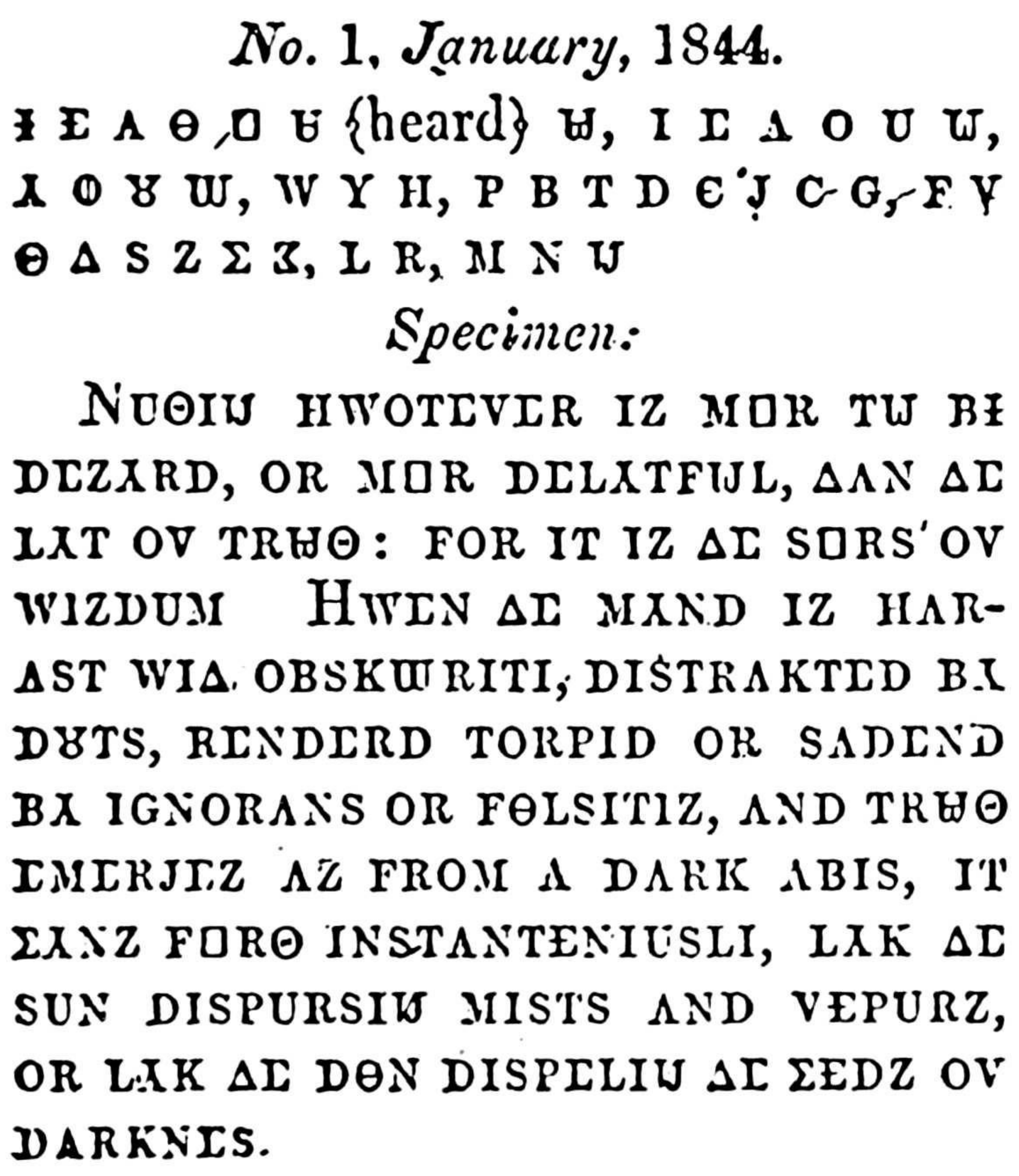
CONSONANT SOUNDS.

g nearly as in English, but approaching to k. d nearly as in English, but approaching to t. h, k, l, m, n, q, s, t, w, y, as in English.

Syllables beginning with g, except Ꭶ, have sometimes the power of k; Ꮩ, Ꮪ, Ꮫ, are sometimes sounded to, tu, tv; and syllables written with tl, except Ꮭ, sometimes vary to dl.

The major Victorian contribution to spelling reform is Isaac Pitman's augmented alphabet named Fonotypy (the prototype of his grandson James Pitman's Initial Teaching Alphabet). The 1846 version utilizes 24 consonants and 16 vowels, of which 11 consonants and 6 vowels were entirely new. The letters c, q, *and* x *were dropped and all digraphs abandoned.*

Five Versions of Fonotypy

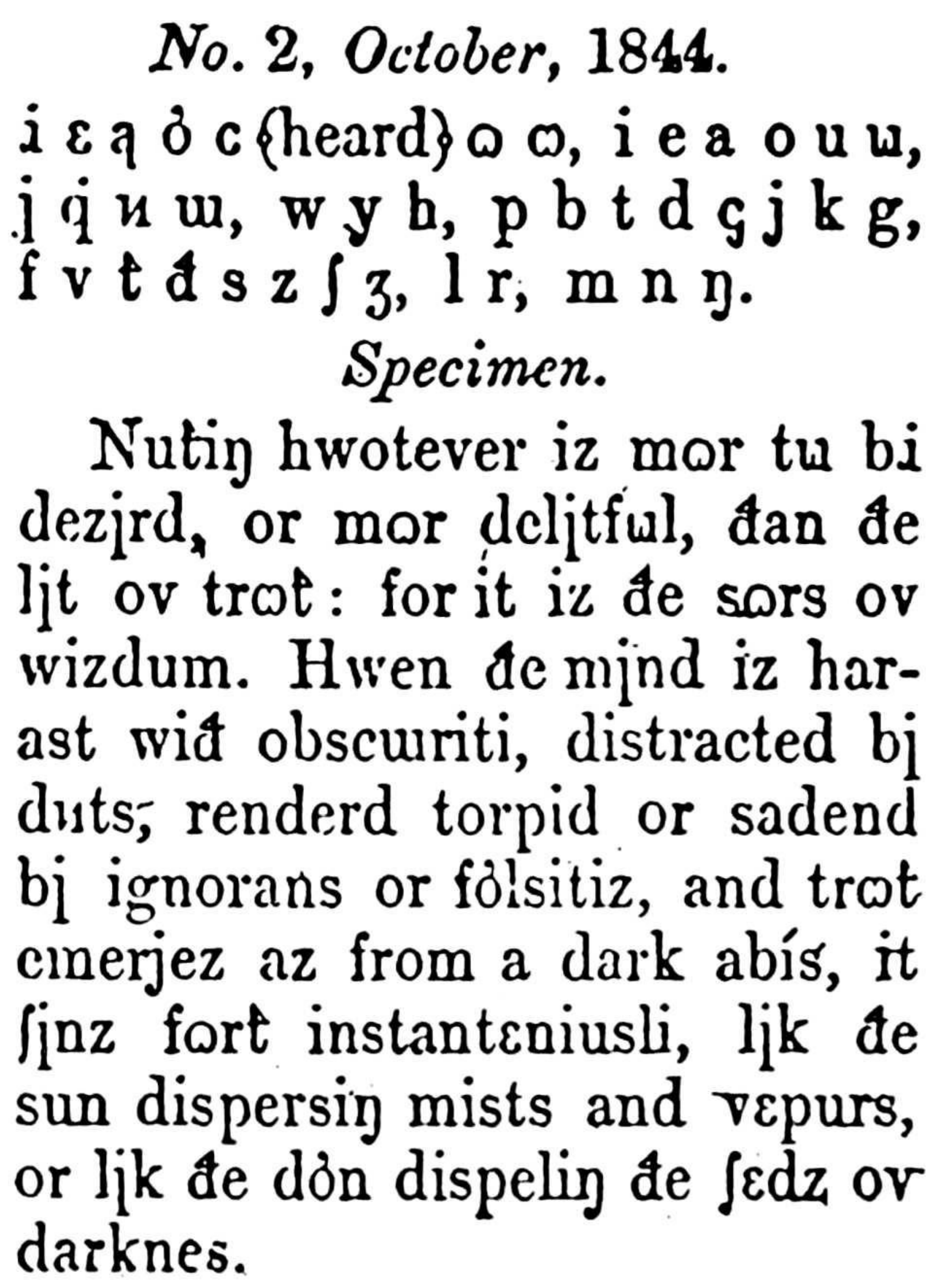


No. 1, *January,* 1844.

ɪ Ɛ Λ Θ ˏƆ Ʊ {heard} Ɯ, I E Λ O U W,
Ʌ Ѻ Ȣ Ш, W Y H, P B T D Є Ĵ C G, F V
Θ Δ S Z Σ Ʒ, L R, M N Ŋ

Specimen:

NUΘIŊ HWOTEVER IZ MOR TU BI DEZɅRD, OR MOR DELɅTFUL, ΔAN ΔE LɅT OV TRUΘ: FOR IT IZ ΔE SORS OV WIZDUM HWEN ΔE MɅND IZ HARAST WIΔ OBSKURITI, DISTRAKTED BɅ DȢTS, RENDERD TORPID OR SADEND BɅ IGNORANS OR FΘLSITIZ, AND TRUΘ EMERJEZ AZ FROM A DARK ABIS, IT ΣɅNZ FORΘ INSTANTENIUSLI, LɅK ΔE SUN DISPURSIŊ MISTS AND VEPURZ, OR LɅK ΔE DΘN DISPELIŊ ΔE ΣEDZ OV DARKNES.



No. 2, *October,* 1844.

ɪ ɛ ɋ ȯ c {heard} ɷ ɷ, i e a o u ɯ,
ȷ ɋ ʉ ɯ, w y h, p b t d ç j k g,
f v ŧ đ s z ʃ ʒ, l r, m n ŋ.

Specimen.

Nutiŋ hwotever iz mɷr tu bi dezȷrd, or mɷr delȷtful, đan đe lȷt ov trɷt: for it iz đe sɷrs ov wizdum. Hwen đe mȷnd iz harast wiđ obscɯriti, distracted bȷ duts; renderd torpid or sadend bȷ ignorans or fȯlsitiz, and trɷt emerjez az from a dark abis, it ʃȷnz fɷrt instantɛniusli, lȷk đe sun dispersiŋ mists and vɛpurs, or lȷk đe dȯn dispeliŋ đe ʃɛdz ov darknes.

No. 3, *June,* 1846.

ɨ ε ɑ ɵ ω ɯ, i e a o u ɯ, į σ ȣ ų,
w y h, p b t d ç j c g, f v ŧ đ s z
ʃ ʒ, l r, m n ŋ.

Specimen.

Núŧiŋ hwotever iz mωr tɯ bɨ dezįrd, or mωr delįtfɯl, đan đe lįt ov trɯŧ : for it iz đe sωrs ov wizdum. Hwen đe mįnd iz harast wiđ obscųriti, distracted bį dȣts, renderd torpid or sadend bį ignorans or fɵlsitiz, and trɯŧ emerjez az from a darc abís, it ʃįnz fωrŧ instantɑniusli, lįc đe sun dispersiŋ mists and vapɯrz, or lįc đe dɵn dispeliŋ đe ʃɑdz ov darcnes.

No. 4, *Jan.,* 1847.

ε a ɋ ɵ ω ɯ, i e ɑ o u ɯ, į σ ȣ ų,
w y h, p b t d ç j c g, f v ŧ đ s z
ʃ ʒ, l r, m n ŋ.

Specimen.

Nuŧiŋ hwotever iz mωr tɯ bε dezįrd, or mωr delįtfɯl, đɑn đe lįt ov trɯŧ : for it iz đe sωrs ov wizdum. Hwen đe mįnd iz hɑrɑst wiđ obsçųriti, distrɑcted bį dȣts, renderd torpid or sɑd'nd bį ignorɑns or fɵlsitiz, ɑnd trɯŧ emerjez ɑz from ɑ dɑrc ɑbís, it ʃįnz fωrŧ instɑntɑniusli, lįc đe sun dispersiŋ mists ɑnd vapurz, or lįc đe dɵn dispeliŋ đe ʃɑdz ov dɑrcnes.

No, 5, *Proposed Jan.,* 1852.

ɩ ε ɋ ω σ ų, i e a o u ɯ, į ȣ ɯ, w
y h, p b t d ç j c g, f v θ đ s z ʃ ʒ,
l r, m n ŋ.

Specimen.

Nuθiŋ hwotever iz mσr tɯ bɩ dezįrd, or mσr delįtfɯl, đan đe lįt ov trųθ: for it iz đe sσrs ov wizdum. Hwen đe mįnd iz harast wiđ obscɯriti, distracted bį dȣts, renderd torpid or sadend bį ignorans or fωlsitiz, and trųθ emerjez az from a darc abís, it ʃįnz fσrθ instantɛniusli, lįc đe sun dispersiŋ mists and vɛpurz, or lįc đe dωn dispeliŋ đe ʃɛdz ov darcnes.

No 6, *Romanic Alphabet.*

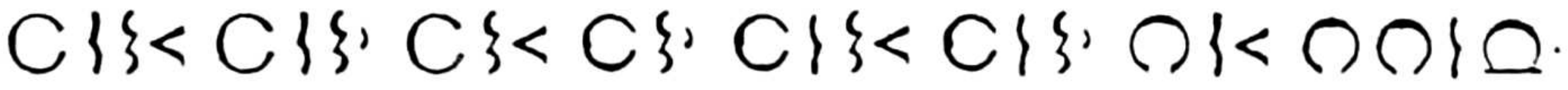
a*a*, b*b*, c*c*, d*d*, e*e*, f*f*, g*g*, h*h* i*i*, j*j*,
k*c*, l*l*, m*m*, n*n*, o*o*, p*p*, q*c*, r*r*, s*s*, t*t*,
u*u*, v*v*, w*w*, x*cs*, y*y*, z*z*.

Specimen.

Nothing whatever is more to be desired, or more delightful, than the light of truth: for it is the source of wisdom. When the mind is harassed with obscurity, distracted by doubts, rendered torpid or saddened by ignorance or falsities, and truth emerges as from a dark abyss, it shines forth instantaneously, like the sun dispersing mists and vapours, or like the dawn dispelling the shades of darkness.

Alexander Melville Bell

Beginning as an influential guide to elocution and public address (see his "Oral Gymnastics" in "Sound Effects," p. 99 above), Bell went on to invent an alphabet and become a champion of orthographic reform. His fame could never rival that of his son, Alexander Graham Bell, whose invention of the telephone and work on behalf of the deaf were very much an extension of his father's interests in rendering speech visible. The son's famous invention failed to achieve that goal, despite its origin in experimental attempts to photograph speech or otherwise render visible its vibratory imprint (inspired in part by Leon Scott's "phonautograph," a machine bearing comparison with Chladni figures [see "Retentions and Secretions," Part Five]). Bell senior invented an acoustic alphabet designed, like that of de Brosses, to reflect the specific organic activity of speech production. Unlike conventional alphabets, which are either beholden to print precedence or phonetically indebted to a particular language, Bell's Visible Speech *(1867) supplements the basic repertoire of vowels and consonants with over forty additional marks (glides, modifiers, and tones). So precise a system could even extend beyond speech to sounds in general, as in this acoustogram for the sound of sawing wood:*



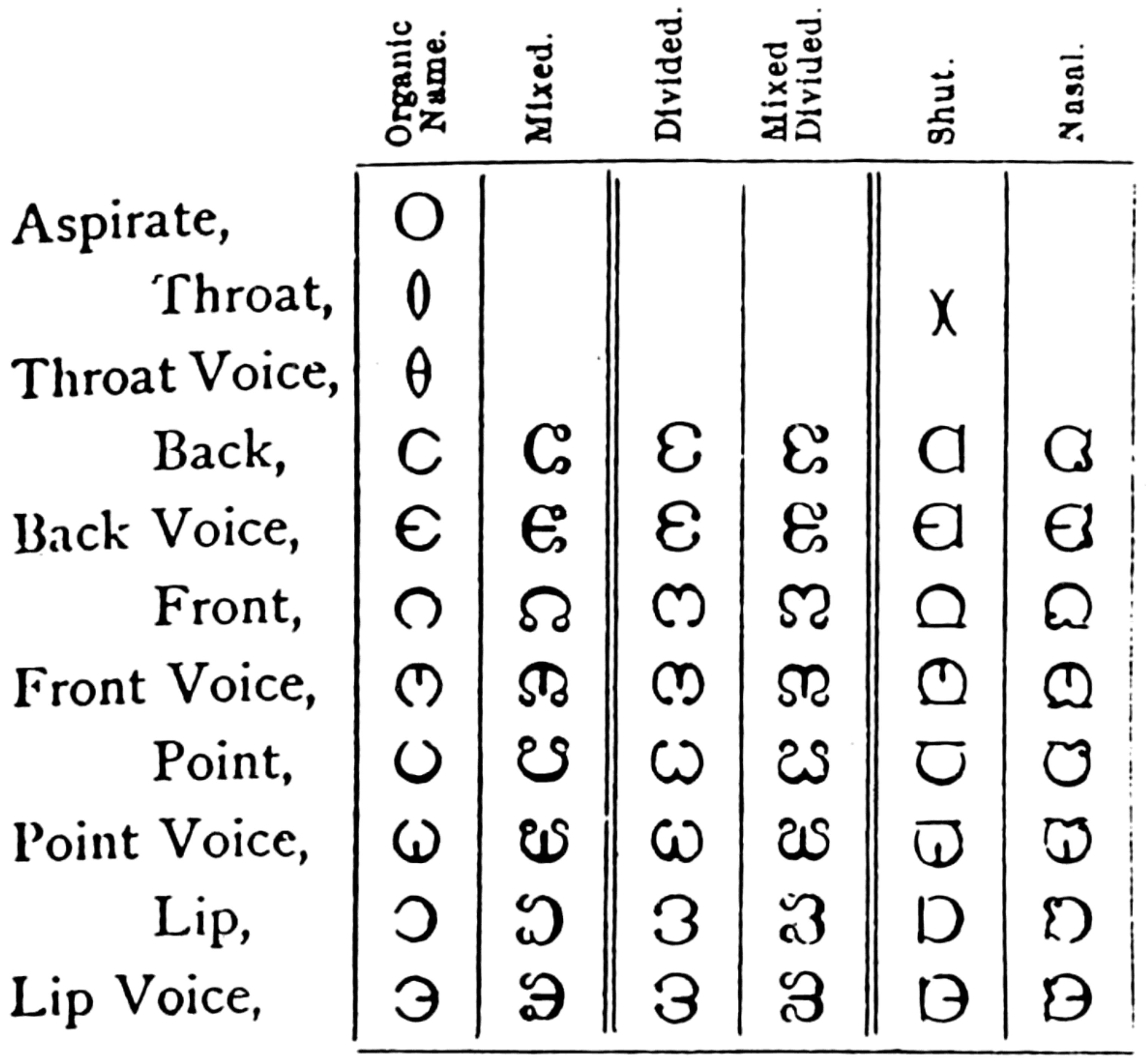
Not surprisingly, Bell harbored global aspirations for his invention: "The object of Visible Speech is not—as some have supposed—to supersede ordinary letters. No revolution in national orthography is aimed at. The system simply furnishes a KEY TO ALL LETTERS *here and elsewhere, and an* INTERNATIONAL *medium in which every Language may be expressed with* UNIVERSAL LEGIBILITY.*" Despite this disclaimer, by 1888 Bell was not only advocating English linguistic imperialism but throwing his weight behind orthographic reforms that he hoped would realize his dream of "World-English"—and, in the process, abandoning the promise of Visible Speech. As he explains in the orthography of World-English:*

> wuɹld-iŋgliş prēze'nts ɖi iŋgliş laŋgwij—mād inte'lijibl, ēkwoli tů ôl rēdėɹz—bɿ mēnz ov a simpl and konsi'stent mōd ov ɹɿtiŋ. ɖi supō'zd nēse'siti for a nyū intėɹna'şunal laŋgwij wil bē entɿ'ɹli syůpėɹsē'ded bɿ fuɹnişiŋ iŋgliş wiɖ ɖis alfabe'tik påspȯɹt tů yůnivė'ɹsal akse'ptans.

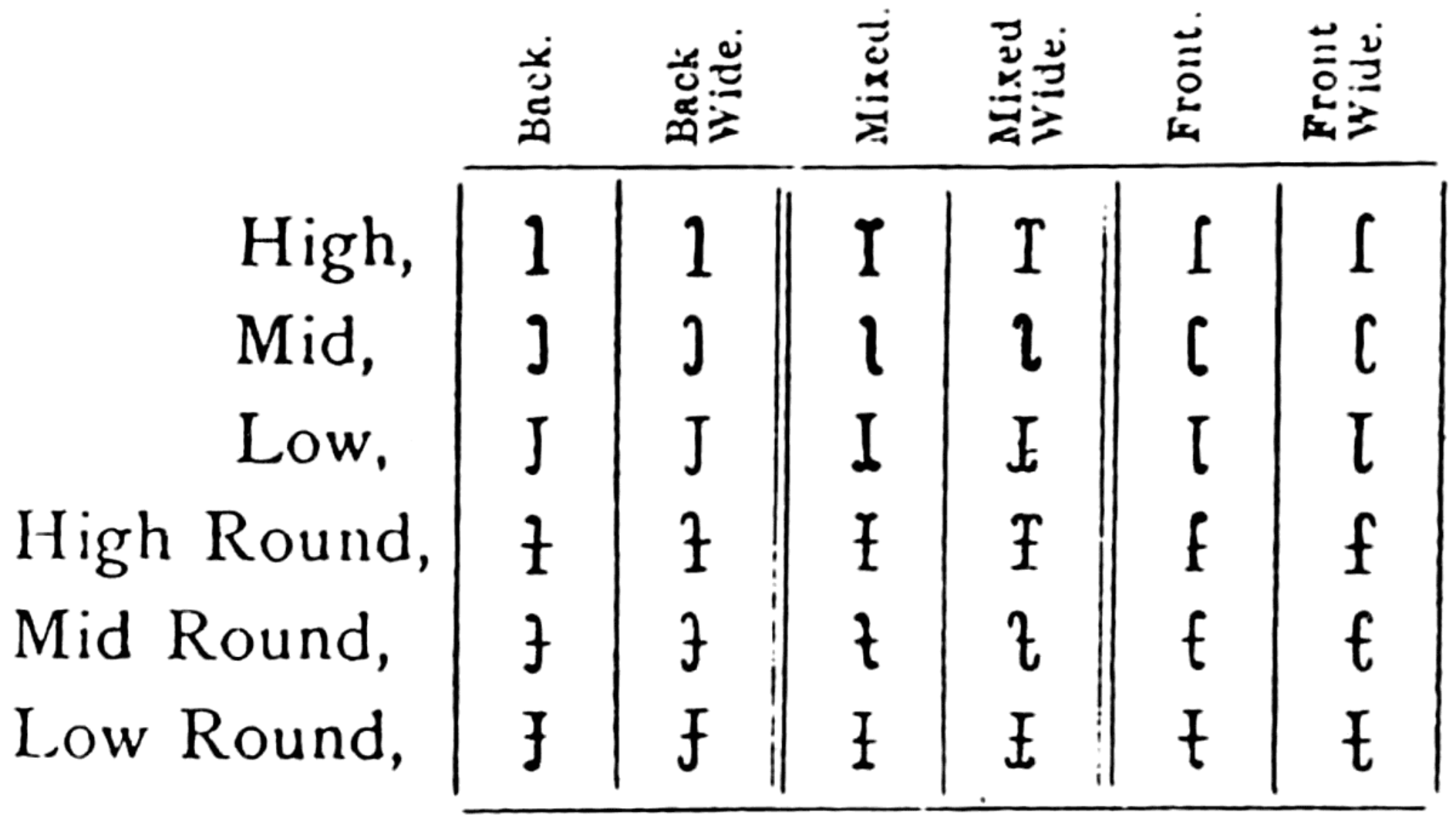
In addition to Visible Speech, we include a signing alphabet adapted to Bell's system by Edward Lyon at the Western New York Institution for Deaf-Mutes at Rochester (1891).

COMPLETE TABLE OF LETTERS,—WITH THEIR NAMES.

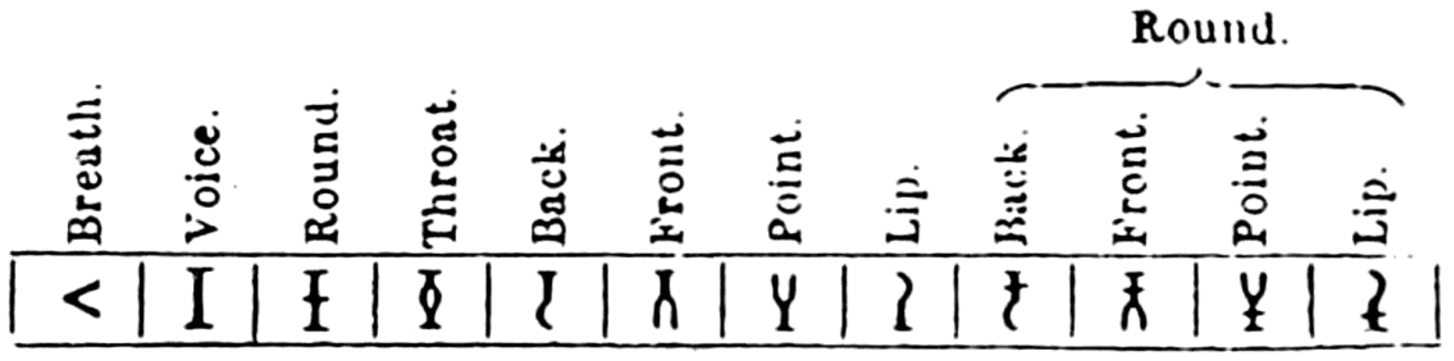
Consonants.


Organic Name.
Mixed.
Divided.
Mixed Divided.
Shut.
Nasal.
Aspirate,
Throat,
Throat Voice,
Back,
Back Voice,
Front,
Front Voice,
Point,
Point Voice,
Lip,
Lip Voice,

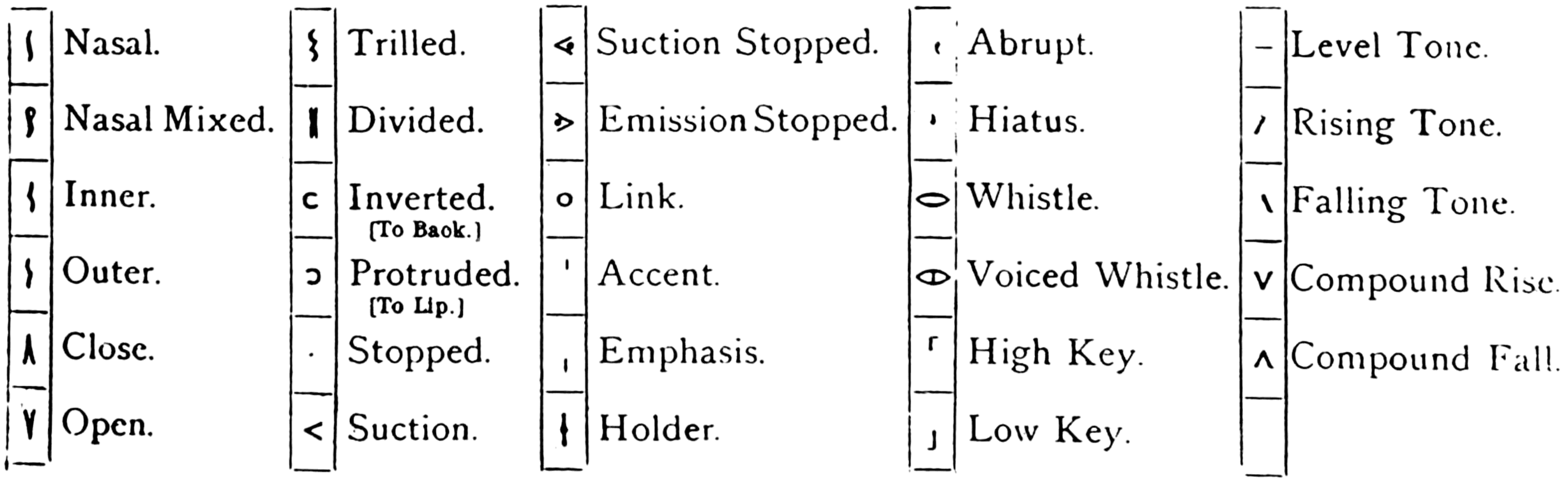
Vowels.

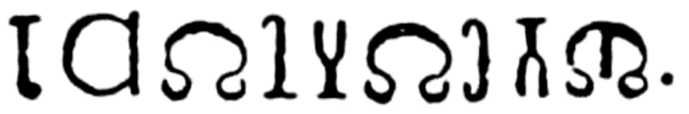

Back.
Back Wide.
Mixed.
Mixed Wide.
Front.
Front Wide.
High,
Mid,
Low,
High Round,
Mid Round,
Low Round,

Glides.

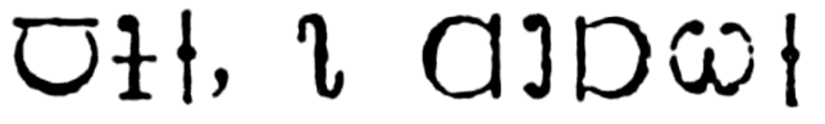

Round.
Breath.
Voice.
Round.
Throat.
Back.
Front.
Point.
Lip.
Back.
Front.
Point.
Lip.

Modifiers and Tones.

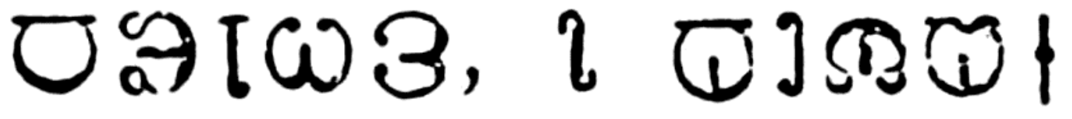

Nasal.
Nasal Mixed.
Inner.
Outer.
Close.
Open.
Trilled.
Divided.
Inverted. [To Back.]
Protruded. [To Lip.]
Stopped.
Suction.
Suction Stopped.
Emission Stopped.
Link.
Accent.
Emphasis.
Holder.
Abrupt.
Hiatus.
Whistle.
Voiced Whistle.
High Key.
Low Key.
Level Tone.
Rising Tone.
Falling Tone.
Compound Rise.
Compound Fall.



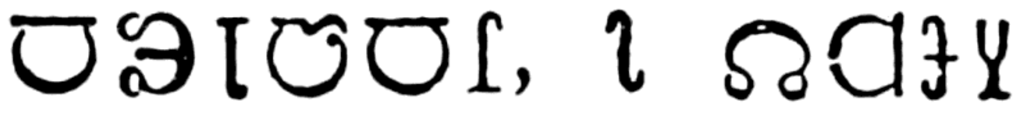
[EXERCISE.]



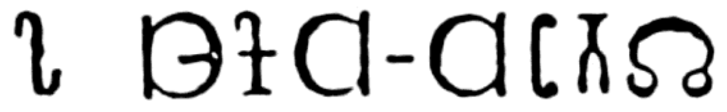
Two, a couple.



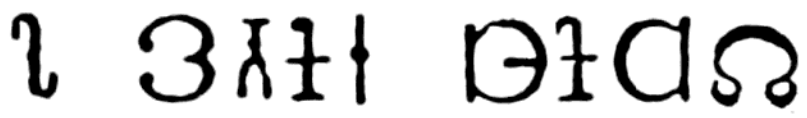
Twelve, a dozen.



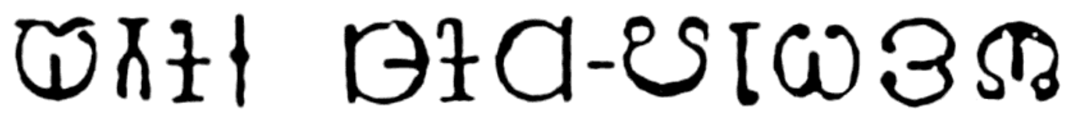
Twenty, a score.



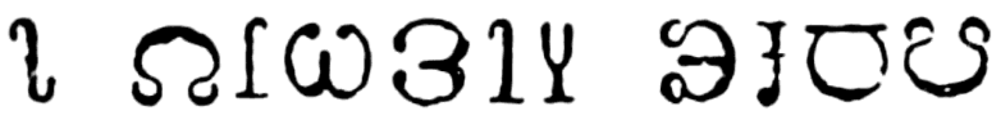
A book-case.



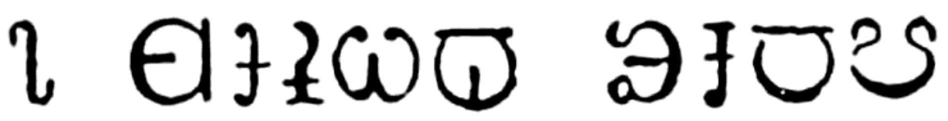
A few books.



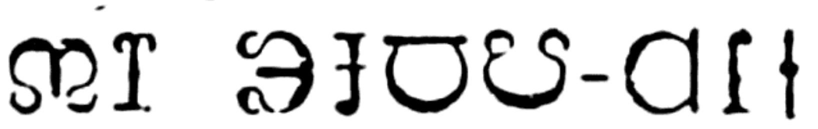
New book-shelves.



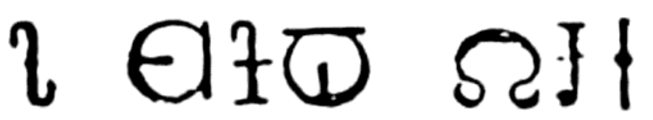
A silver watch.



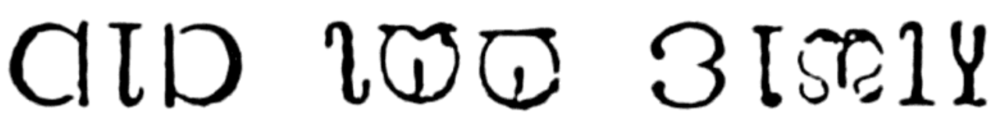
A gold watch.



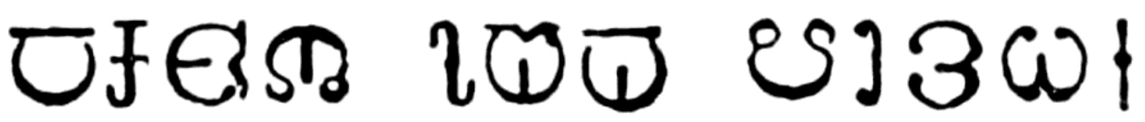
The watch-key.



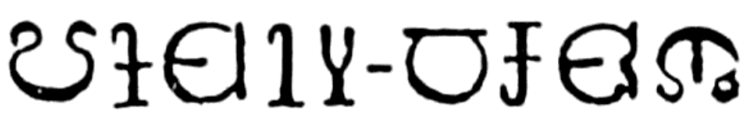
A good saw.



Cap and feather.

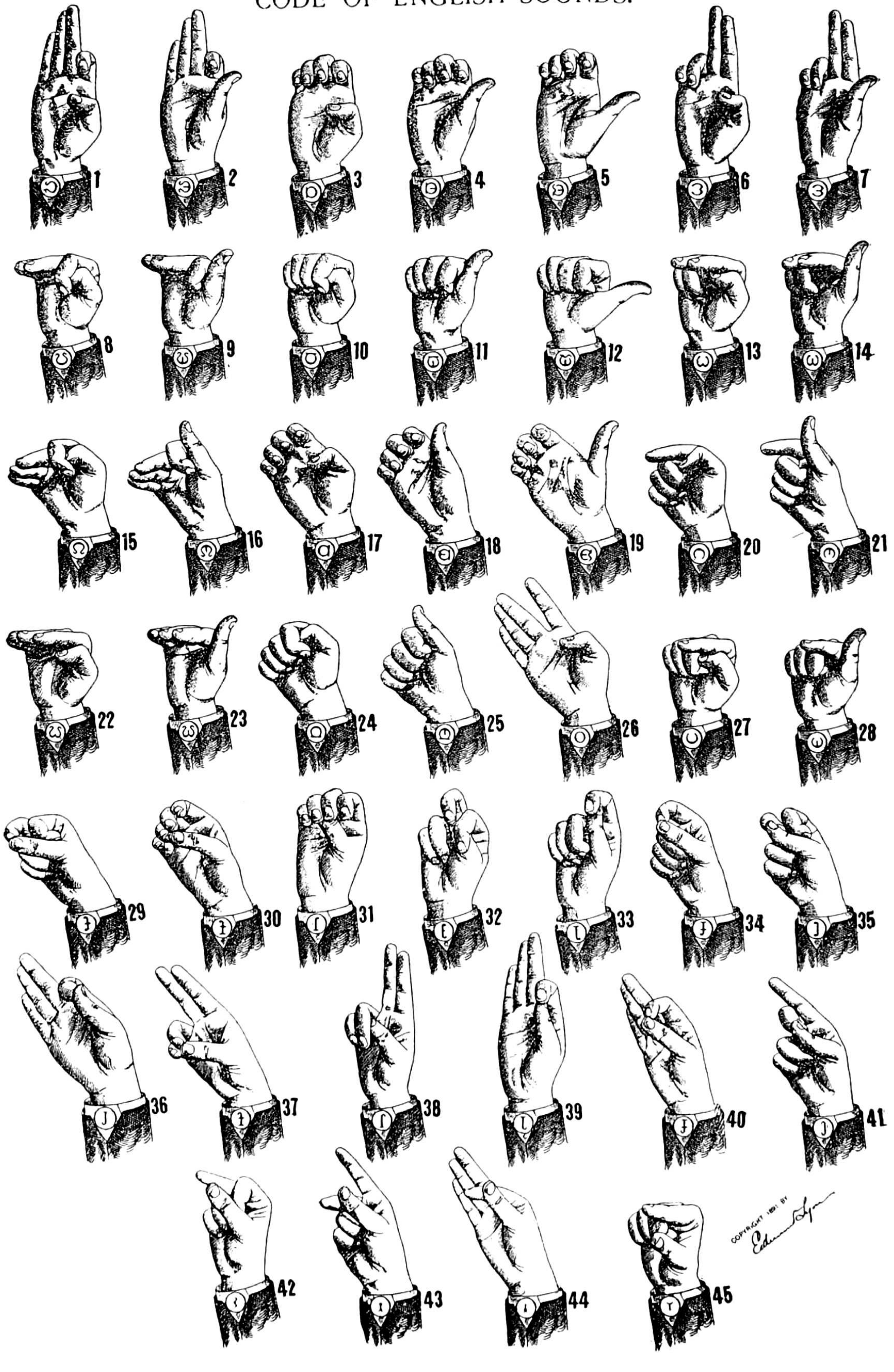


Tongs and shovel.



Sugar-tongs.

CODE OF ENGLISH SOUNDS.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Edmund Lyon

Alexander Melville Bell

George Bernard Shaw

Colossal Labor Saving

An Open Letter (May, 1947)

Simplified spelling has been advocated for 100 years without producing the smallest effect. To waste another moment on it seems to me perverse indifference to hard fact. People will not accept a spelling that looks illiterate. To spell English phonetically within the limits of a 26 letter alphabet is impossible. A British alphabet must have at least 44 letters; and though the addition of 19 new letters to Dr. Johnson's stock would distinguish it from illiterate spelling the result would not be Simplified Spelling.

What hinders a change is its apparently enormous cost. Only one answer can overcome this hesitation. In any fair and simple test between two experts copying the same text for a minute in Johnsonese and in phonetic, the time saved by phonetic will come out round about 20% as stated by our phoneticians. Such a figure impresses nobody: we might as well attempt to move Mont Blanc with an egg spoon. But the figure is wrong: it leaves out the time factor. We are used to read per cent as per cent per year; but in the test per cent is per cent per minute. Now there are 525,000 minutes in a year; consequently the saving 20% per minute means a labor saving of two months' working days per scribe every year. Multiply this figure by an estimate of the number of persons who at every moment of the 24 hours are writing the English language in the British Commonwealth and in America, and the total is astronomical. The mere suggestion of it is enough to sweep away the notion that we cannot afford the change. On the contrary we cannot afford to postpone it for five minutes.

As far as I know, this overwhelming calculation has never before been presented. . . . Dickens, though a professional verbatim reporter, had to do through the drudgery of writing all his novels in Johnsonese longhand for the printer. Why could Dickens not have used his shorthand as I used Pitman? Because Pitman, like Sweet and Gregg, corrupted their scripts into codes for verbatim reporting, which is phonetically impossible, as men speak faster than they can write, and therefore have to be reported not by phonetic alphabets but by scrawls on paper which the reporter has come to associate with a few thousand words and phrases after years of practice. Such scrawls vary enough to be illegible by anyone but the reporter, and not always by him or her after the speech fades from memory. . . .

What a phonetic alphabet must save is manual labor, no matter whether it is written at 12 words a minute or 200. Why not solve the problem as I have solved it for myself by using the existing phonetic alphabets without reporting contractions? They all have the requisite 40-odd letters. I recommend all authors to do this; but it has all to be rewritten by the typist for the printer in Johnsonese. Besides, they are not graphic enough, not handsome enough, use vertical and horizontal strokes not writable *currente calamo,* and have only a pretence of the sixteen indispensible vowels. A page of the new alphabet should be as handsome as a page set by Jensen or Morris, or a page of the Chantilly psalter. Ugly books would damn any alphabet. . . .

Phoneticians waste time and quarrel over their different plans for a universal language and for correct spelling. Complete phonetic spelling is impossible:

Henry Sweet claimed that he could distinguish 11,000 sounds in spoken English; and I, as ex-chairman of the B.B.C. Committee for Spoken English, can testify that no two speakers have the same vowels any more than they have the same finger prints. But an alphabet of 11,000 letters is not necessary. Though we have as many different accents as there are millions of population, we can understand one another's speech and writing with an alphabet of 44 letters without the least difficulty; and as the sole purpose of speech and writing is to enable us to communicate with one another, 44 letters are enough.

There is still the question of foreign languages. Here we assume that it is necessary to write and speak these grammatically. On the contrary, we must abolish grammar to the least practical point. For example, Spanish would be an easy language to learn but for its irregular verbs. But why not regularize them? When a child says "I think you buyed me a doll" it is perfectly intelligible. What more is needed? When an English peasant says "I be, you be, we be, they be" we understand him quite as well as if he said "I am, you are, he is, we are, they are." . . .

There need be no more discussion about spelling: the required 44 letters are established in all phonetic treatises and scripts. The reform must be conducted by politicians, statisticians, and mathematicians, with, as assessors, printing engineers and possibly an author or two. The new alphabet must be designed by artist-calligraphers. . . .

It is a hundred years since the first phoneticians did all they could for Spelling Reform, without the slightest success. The motive power must now come from the colossal labor saving figures, which are new. I have done what I can to draw attention to them; but this is a whole-time-job for a reformer out for a success like that of Rowland Hill; and I, a superannuated playwright and Victorian Fabian sociologist, can only suggest. Perhaps it would suit you.

faithfully

G. B. S.

Part Five

Matter and Atom

Retentions and Secretions

"Listen: a fourworded wavespeech: seesoo, hrss, rsseeiss, ooos"—this is what Stephen Dedalus hears in the sea as he walks on Sandymount Strand in Ulysses. *Later, Leopold Bloom hears a creaky door: "Almost human the way it sltt to call attention. Doing its level best to speak. That door too sllt creaking, asking to be shut. Everything speaks in its own way. Sllt." Joyce's Odyssean peregrination is an initiation into the realm of signs. Environmental noises afford a glimpse into pansemiosis—which was a preoccupation of Romanticism, commemorated in the wind-harp, that privileged figure of art-as-nature. Coleridge in "The Aeolian Harp" asks:*

> And what if all of animated nature
> Be but organic harps diversely framed,
> That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps,
> Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
> At once the soul of each, and God of all?

In a letter Coleridge wondered "Is thinking *impossible without arbitrary signs? and—how far is the word 'arbitrary' a misnomer? Are not words etc parts and germinations of the Plant? And what is the law of their Growth?—In something of this order I would endeavour to destroy the old antithesis of* Words and Things, *elevating, as it were, words into Things, and living Things too." Novalis, mindful of the exfoliating propensity of organic form, understood language as a manifestation of autopoietic process: few really notice, he said, that language is mainly concerned with itself, with its own potential ("Monologue," in this section).*[1] *In a singular insight, Novalis comprehends something not given much credence until a century later with Mallarmé: namely, that language achieves an autonomy exceeding that of its users—not a domestic utensil but an encompassing feature of the planet.*

Michel de Certeau notes that long before humans appear, language is already waiting for Godot. An allegiance to the thought of originality is not only inscribed in language, it is *language. To envision language as organic form, susceptible to "germinations" as Coleridge has it, is to bear witness to the earth as a compendium of simulacra. So, for Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Every book is a quotation; and every house is a quotation out of all forests, and mines, and stone quarries; and every man is a quotation from all his ancestors." The genetic code, subsumed within a vision of semiotic plenitude, marks all ancestry and derivation as supplementary. Mystics attribute authorship to God; moderns refer unlimited semiosis to the death of God (Nietzsche) or the death of the author (Barthes, Foucault). In a mocking absorption of both perspectives into the portmanteau combinatorial of* Finnegans Wake, *Joyce comments simultaneously on his own text and on the book of nature: "Every dimmed letter in it is a copy and not a few of the silbils and wholly words. . . . The loquacity of him! . . . The last word in stolentelling!" For the author who stole the plot of* Ulysses *from Homer—but in doing so revealed the infinite elasticity of language, in which a copy impetuously exceeds its model—there is of course no "last word" in storytelling, as long as "wavespeech" and creaky door persist. In* Finnegans Wake *it is a "mamafesta" of edenic news: "our turfbrown mummy is acoming, alpilla, beltilla, ciltilla, deltilla, running with her tidings, old the news of the great big world."*[2]

In the domain of the computer, in which words are dissolved into pixels and stored in microchips, the organicist model appears to recede. But the insistence of a terrestrial atomism prepares us for even this transformation, at least if we bear in mind the clinamen, the initiatory swerve into intelligible semiosis (see the preface to "Clinamen," p. 532 below). The proper way to describe the atomic clinamen is gratuitous, *like the "uncontrolled inventiveness" Claude Lévi-Strauss takes as evidence of "the apparent arbitrariness of the mind [with] its supposedly spontaneous flow of inspiration," concluding that "when the mind is left to commune with itself and no longer has to come to terms with objects, it is in a sense reduced to imitating itself as object." But, to be clear about this, such "reduction" is clarification: mind produces patterned corollaries to the world, not mimetic and referential epiphenomena. Mythological thought "coincides with its object by forming a homologous image of it but never succeeds in blending with it, since thought and its object operate on different levels." To speak of this as equivocal is in fact to the point: words both are and are not what they refer to. Language forms and performs our membership in the world, melting a resistant reality into pliable accessibility while at the same time producing and inducing distance, deferral, difference; so that there is always a new discrepancy to overcome by yet another act of signification, and each sign tendered to fill the gap creates another gap, another space in which the gratuitous deviance of the clinamen may (or may not) swerve. Whenever in conversation we say "if you know what I mean" or "if you get my drift," a small prayer or genuflection inclines toward the clinamen—which, it is hoped, will incline toward us in turn.*

Semiosis is not a matter of delegation, but a cascade of attempts in the spirit of Robert Musil's "essayism": "a mobile equilibrium that at every moment requires continual efforts at renewal." We move most amply in evocation, not affadavit. Anthropologist Roy Wagner remarks that "a myth does not say *things but* makes *them, and then disappears into its result." Myth here functions as speech, as it does for Claude Lévi-Strauss; and we might usefully recall Charles Olson's definition of myth, following Jane Ellen Harrison, as "what is said of what is said." What is said adds a new resonance to the world; it does not merely reiterate what was already there. Wagner refers to this supplementary* perpetuum mobile *as "symbolic obviation," exemplified by the Daribi (for whom pigs are "the definitive domestic food"): "'a goat is not a very good pig; the best pig is a cow'."*

The generative realm of reciprocity through analogy is ardently pursued by Michel Leiris in "Persephone," a chapter of his autobiographical Rules of the Game I: Scratches [La règle du jeu: Biffures], *in which recollection of materialities of communication in childhood leads to reveries of the* *animal, vegetal, and mineral worlds. The phonograph, for instance, stimulates associations with tongue, horn, bell, diaphragm, and (by way of the letter* g *in diaphragm) fragment. The cylinder roll of the phonograph (Leiris was born in 1901) emitted a tactile peppery sound. "It wasn't the sizzling noises the telephone sometimes makes; it wasn't the hissing of damp wood as it burns or the crunching of dry leaves trampled underfoot. Because of its slightly fatty quality, it was more like a tongue smacking or perhaps a whip cracking lightly. . . . This noise—which truly gave the impression of a fracture or the fragmentation of some kind of mineral substance—interrupted the tranquil flow of time." The mineralogical imagination aroused, a pencil becomes the virtual extension of mining and archaeology (reminding us that Novalis was a mining inspector, whose vision of language was deeply informed by the fractal crystallization of subterranean space): "In the center of this wooden envelope, itself surrounded by emanations of stimulating perfume [of the forestry smell], is buried the carboniferous seam of the pencil lead, of which the slender, rigid shaft with a round or polygonal section enclosing it seems to be not only the protective sheath but the nourishing environment. Thus, in true coalmines worked deep in the earth are vegetable humus and geological sediments heaped up above the covered substance, like piles of provisions that allow it to batten secretly and keep forming itself anew." The telluric pull in the pencil evokes in turn those "gnome's rumblings" Leiris associates with mines; which, in his case, is not unrelated to his gramophone, marketed (probably owing to the fact that it "read" cylinder rolls) as a* graphophone—*a name that fractures into a homonym, "grapho-faun" (the woodland faun or sylph being pronounced in French like "phone"). Throughout the "Persephone" chapter, Leiris substantiates the psychosensory stimulation of terrestrial secretions and vapors.*

When words are conceived as arising from below, the convenient analogies are archaeology (for Freud) and geology. Earthworks artist Robert Smithson notes a comparable analogy: "Words and rocks contain a language that follows a syntax of splits and ruptures. Look at any word *long enough and you will see it open up into a series of faults, into a terrain of particles each containing its own void." The fossil record is a material earth-transcript in Emerson's famous vision of poetry: Leiris's caves; Rilke's "wunderlichen Bergwerk" with its mine of souls in "Orpheus Euridike Hermes"; the telluric magnetism of Pablo Neruda's* Odas elementales, *are modern versions of the premodern epistemology of nature's book, transmitted in part by the Jena Romantics' journal* Athenaeum *with its redemptive vision of the fragment, the aphorism, and the symbol as conceptual sediment of global proportion—atomic parts, in declination. Fragmentary forms and inferior parts were ports of access to another realm.*

To go down, in the Romantic epistemology, is to be dissolved to a new conception, a process of which the dispersion of words into letters is a type. In Emerson's famous vision,

> The meaner the type by which a law is expressed, the more pungent it is, and the more lasting in the memories of men; just as we choose the smallest box or case in which any needful untensil can be carried. Bare lists of words are found suggestive to an imaginative

> and excited mind. . . . We are far from having exhausted the significance of the few symbols we use. We can come to use them yet with a terrible simplicity. It does not need that a poem should be long. Every word was once a poem. Every new relation is a new word. . . . The etymologist finds the deadest word to have been once a brilliant picture. Language is fossil poetry. As the limestone of the continent consists of infinite masses of the shells of animalcules, so language is made up of images or tropes, which now, in their secondary use, have long ceased to remind us of their poetic origin.

In Whitman's variant of fossil poetry, "Language is concrete metaphysics." "Language is a perfect Geology, with its strata, formations, and developments," he says. "Material forms—ocean, air, soil, fire, stars, life, growths—these are sublime primeval Words. These the Expressive passion dissolves into plastic symbols." Whitman's immense catalogues rival the atomic materialism of Lucretius in their punctual specificity. "Were you thinking that those were the words, those upright lines? those curves, angles, dots?" he asks in "A Song of the Rolling Earth":

> No, those are not the words,
> Air, soil, water, fire—those are the words,
> I myself am a word with them—my qualities interpenetrate theirs . . .
> Each man to himself and each woman to herself, is the word of the past and present.

These earthwords and wavewords are premonitions harking back to the ancient doctrine of signatures, notably in the great "Sea Drift" poems that make audible a word "from your liquid rims and wet sands," "seiz'd by the spirit that trails in the lines underfoot, / The rim, the sediment," by which Whitman comes to see that "I too but signify at the utmost a little wash'd-up drift" ("As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life"), in a vision like Gerard Manley Hopkins's sybilline leaves "Disremembering, dísmémbering."[3] *A liquidation of sense deposits a material residue, as in Ed Ruscha's "Liquid Words," a series of paintings that "leaves no role to our imagination other than to complete the work of decomposition." Whether the material deposit is liquid or fossiliferous, the plastic imagination is haunted by a phantom kinship with signifying form in speech and writing—to which the ease of transposition between poetics and crystallography in Christian Bök's work is testimony.*

The world as hologram, in which every part is a kind of migratory component of an encrypted phenotype, naturally suggests a similar role for the letters of the alphabet. Lucretian physics, equating letter with atom, awakens "character" (hieroglyph) into character *(persona), folding each into the implicate order of its other. It's by way of a telluric holography that to read* Finnegans Wake *is to "finally (though not yet endlike) meet with the acquaintance of Mister Typus, Mistress Tope and all the little typtopies. Fillstup. So you need hardly spell me how every word will be bound over to carry three score* *and ten toptypsical readings throughout the book of Doublends Jined." Such polymorphism of semiotic animation weighs on reading—interpretation, hermeneutics—with a peculiar force: "Every sentence in the* Wake *can be taken as the key to the entire work or can just as well be totally ignored."* Ulysses *had provided a vision of lexic hallucination, with Stephen sitting drunk and exhausted in the cabman's shelter: "He could hear, of course, all kinds of words changing colour like those crabs about Ringsend in the morning, burrowing quickly into all colours of different sorts of the same sand where they had a home somewhere beneath or seemed to." To flag or fall behind is to descend to another pattern, which is a key recognition for Ernest Fenollosa's speculations in "The Chinese Written Character," where "a nerve, a wire, a roadway, and a clearing-house are only varying channels which communication forces for itself," and where the worldly plenitude of homologies and analogies provides bridges "to cross from the minor truth of the seen to the major truth of the unseen."*

The materialities of communication and the communication of materialities are frangible features of that reciprocal framework to which Jacob Boehme's doctrine of signatures attests: "The whole outward visible world with all its being is a signature, or figure of the inward spiritual world; whatever is internally, and however its operation is, so likewise it has its character externally." "No wonder that the earth expresses itself outwardly in leaves," Thoreau writes in a passage included here, "it so labors with the idea inwardly. The atoms have already learned this law, and are pregnant by it." The smallest compounds swell with signification. Famous as an apostle of spare living, Thoreau had a gluttonous appetite for etymology (incorporating much material from Charles Kraitsir's Significance of the Alphabet *[1846] into his lettristic reverie on Walden's railway embankment); and* Walden *fulfills his expressed ambition to write a book that would be "a return to the primitive analogical and derivative sources of words." In this aspiration he was preceded by such autodidactic tracts as* Etymological Organic Reasoner *(1807) by Samuel Henshall, and* Etymologicon Universale *(1811, 1825) by Walter Whiter (who held that "the prevailing ideas conveyed by Human Speech have arisen from the contemplation of the objects on the surface of the Earth, as* Dirt, Mud *"). Alexander Murray, who like Thoreau sought out analogical roots, decided that the primitive particles of language were* ag, bag, dwag, gwag, lag, mag, nag, rag, *and* swag, *all of which were variants of "striking" and "pressing." In* Philosophic Etymology *(1816), James Gilchrist proposed a "curiologic (or circle-graphic) method of significancy," initialized by the letter O, at once a model of infinite circularity and the shape of the open lips. O and I formed the cosmological ground for the Welshman Rowland Jones, in whose poetically suggestive etymological reveries condensation is the guiding principle (as it would subsequently be for Horne Tooke),*[4] *as Bible becomes "the flowing light of life thing"; Reason "the reflowing motion, illation or numeration of the mind concerning its objects"; Tongue "the tone spring action"; Universe "the one spring of the world"; Existence "out at the side or surface of essence"; and Blood "the life flood." As Boehme says: "Everything has its mouth to manifestation."*

1 “The motive for speech does not lie outside of language but is to be discovered within the language itself.” “The word must communicate *something* (other than itself). That is really the Fall of language-mind.” Michel Foucault argues on behalf of the radical intransitivity of literature: “in order to break with a number of myths, including that of the expressive character of literature, it has been very important to pose this great principle that literature is concerned only with itself.” The point is further elaborated in Michel Leiris’s “Glossary” included here.

2 John Bulwer (see “Communities,” p. 58 above) regarded words as “a species of motion,” citing as evidence the resemblance of letters to natural phenomena: “As trembling of the water hath resemblance with the Letter L. quenching of hot mettals with the Letter *z,* snarling of Dogs with the letter R, the noyse of screetch-owles with the letter sh. voyce of Care with the Dipthongue ou; sounds of strings with the Letters ng.”

3 Hopkins’s stress indicators in the poem wrench sounds apart inside words, tearing the text asunder like the Sibyl’s prophetic leaves. The journal entries included in our selection here give ample evidence of Hopkins’s interest in the particulate grit of etymology. But the phonocentric remains paramount in the end. Regarding “Spelt from Sibyl’s Leaves,” Hopkins urged his friend Robert Bridges to “remember what applies to all my verse, that it is, as living art should be, made for performance and that its performance is not reading with the eye but loud, leisurely, poetical (not rhetorical) recitation, with long rests, long dwells on the rhyme and other marked syllables, and so on. This sonnet shd. be almost sung: it is most carefully timed in *tempo rubato.*”

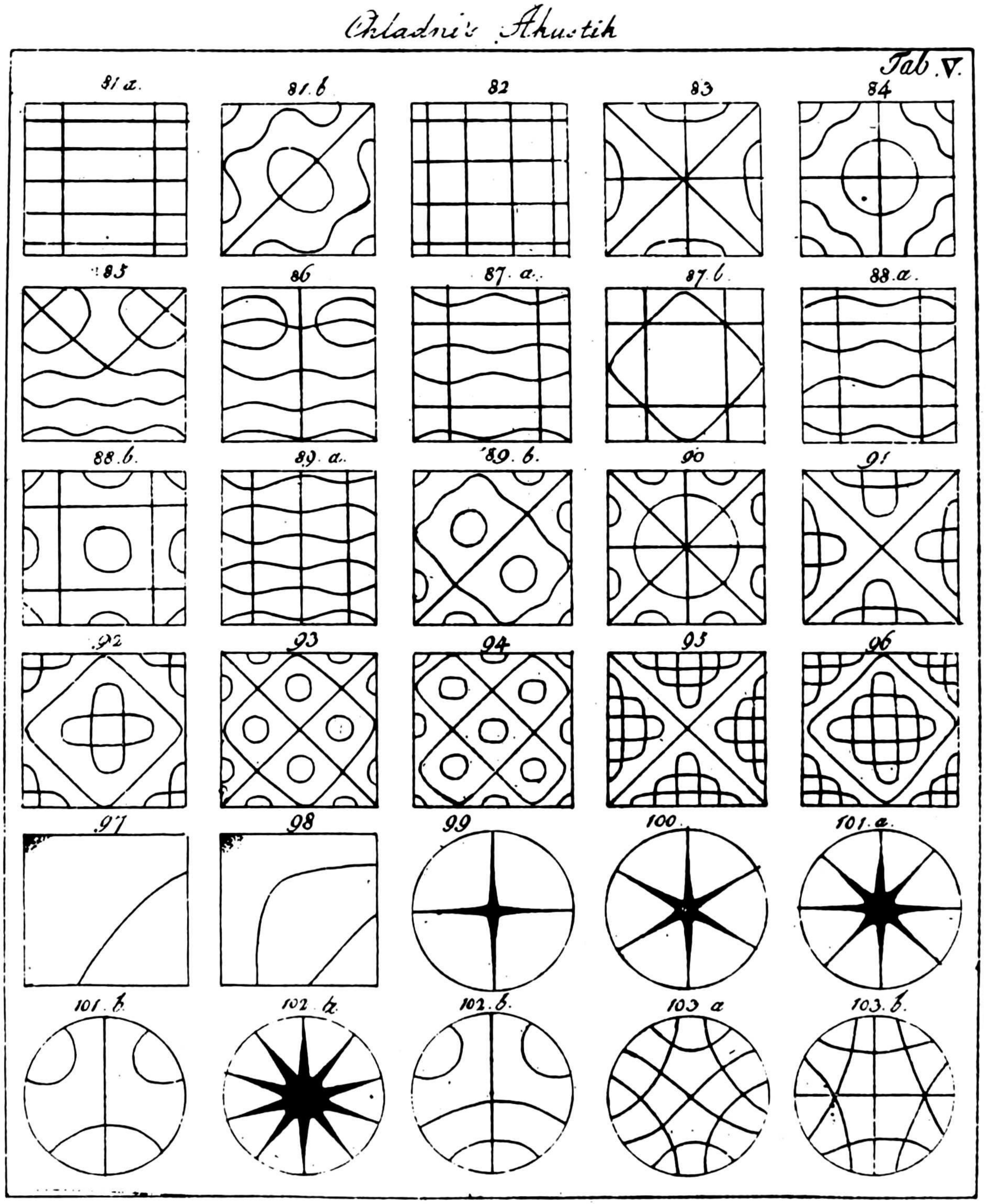
4 “The first aim of Language was to *communicate* our thoughts; the second to do it with *dispatch,*” Horne Tooke wrote. Consequently, “*Abbreviations* are the *wheels* of Language, the *wings* of Mercury.”

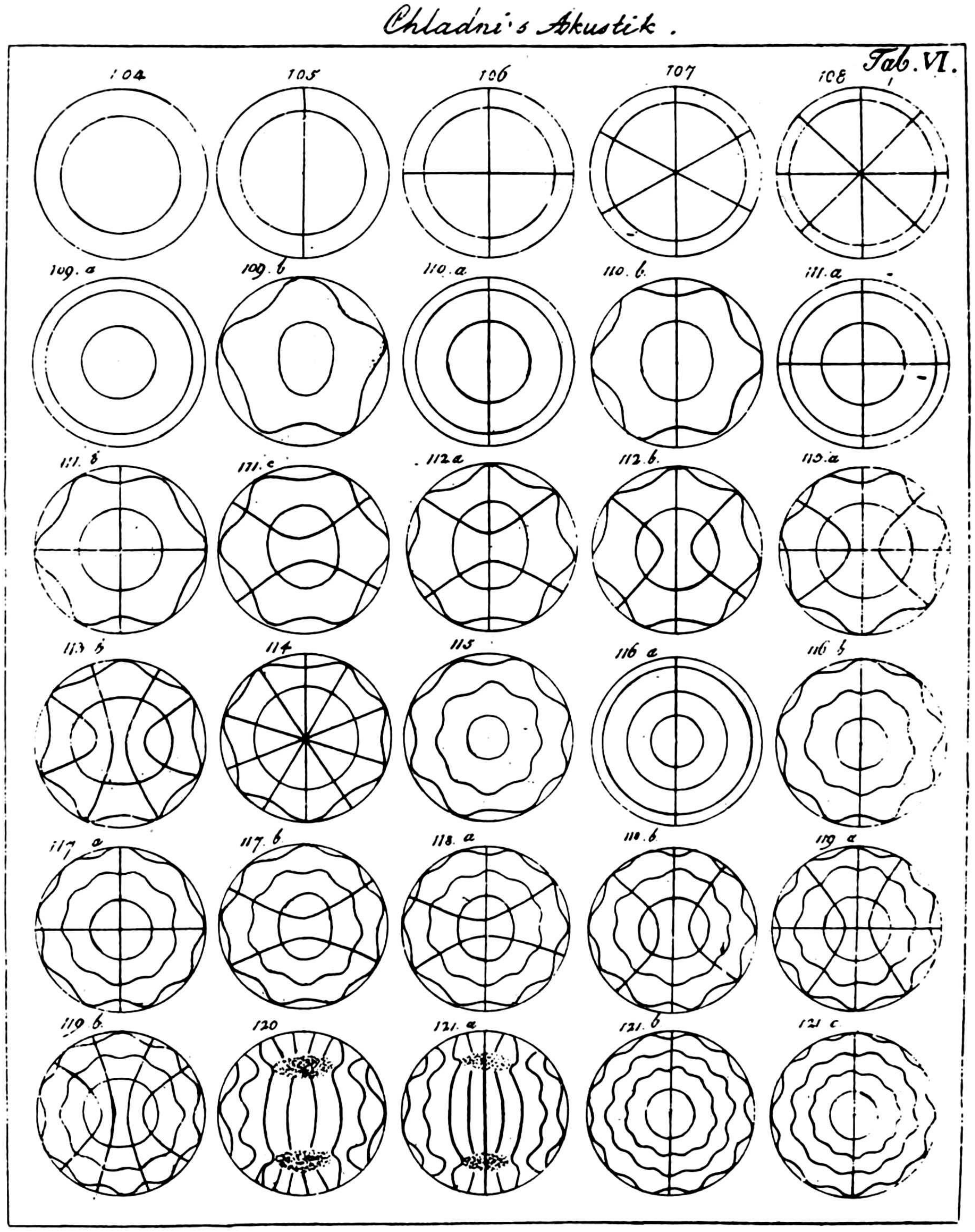
Ernst Chladni

Chladni was a physicist who pioneered research in acoustics. Die Akustik *(1802) presented the results of his experiments, in which he covered thin plates of glass and metal with sand and subjected them to variable sound vibrations. The resulting symmetrical patterns (presented here) became known as "Chladni figures" and earned him an audience with Napoleon in 1809. Chladni's influence extended to Johann Wilhelm Ritter, who in 1801 discovered ultraviolet rays and in 1803 the polarization of electrodes in batteries. "It would be beautiful if what became externally clear here were also exactly what the sound pattern is for us inwardly: a light pattern, fire-writing," Ritter observed of Chladni's figures. "Every sound would then have its own letter directly to hand." Ritter's own avowed aim was "to re-discover, or else to find the primeval or natural script by means of electricity." Ritter was a major figure for Walter Benjamin (disclosing to him "what romantic esotericism is all about"), prompting the speculation that "written language grows out of music and not directly from the sounds of the spoken word." Much under the sway of the Kabbalah and the Pythagorean doctrine of cosmic harmony as transmitted through Hermetic lore, Benjamin envisions the word as a trace of primal pulsation (not unlike the hieroglyphic suggestiveness of the Chladni figures):*

> One is tempted to say that the very fact that [words] still have a meaning in their isolation lends a threatening quality to this remnant of meaning they have kept. In this way language is broken up so as to acquire a changed and intensified meaning in its fragments. With the baroque the place of the capital letter was established in German orthography. It is not only the aspiration to pomp, but at the same time the disjunctive, atomizing principle of the allegorical approach which is asserted here. In its individual parts fragmented language has ceased merely to serve the process of communication, and as a new-born object acquires a dignity equal to that of gods, rivers, virtues and similar natural forms which fuse into the allegorical.

In 1928 Benjamin's friend Theodor Adorno, addressing the musical implications of mechanical piano rolls, recalled Ritter's reference to Chladni's figures as "the script-like Ur-images of sound," adding that "recent technological development has, in any case, continued what was begun there: the possibility of inscribing music without it ever having sounded has simultaneously reified it in an even more inhuman manner and also brought it mysteriously closer to the character of writing and language."


Chladni's Akustik
Tab. V.
81 a.
81. b
82
83
84
85
86
87. a.
87. b
88. a.
88. b.
89. a.
89. b.
90
91
92
93
94
95
96
97
98
99
100
101. a.
101. b.
102. a.
102. b.
103 a
103. b.


Chladni's Akustik.
Tab. VI.
104
105
106
107
108
109. a
109. b
110. a
110. b
111. a
111. b
111. c
112 a
112. b
113. a
113 b
114
115
116 a
116 b
117 a
117. b
118. a
118. b
119 a
119 b
120
121. a
121. b
121 c

Chladni Figures

Christian Bök

Crystal Systems

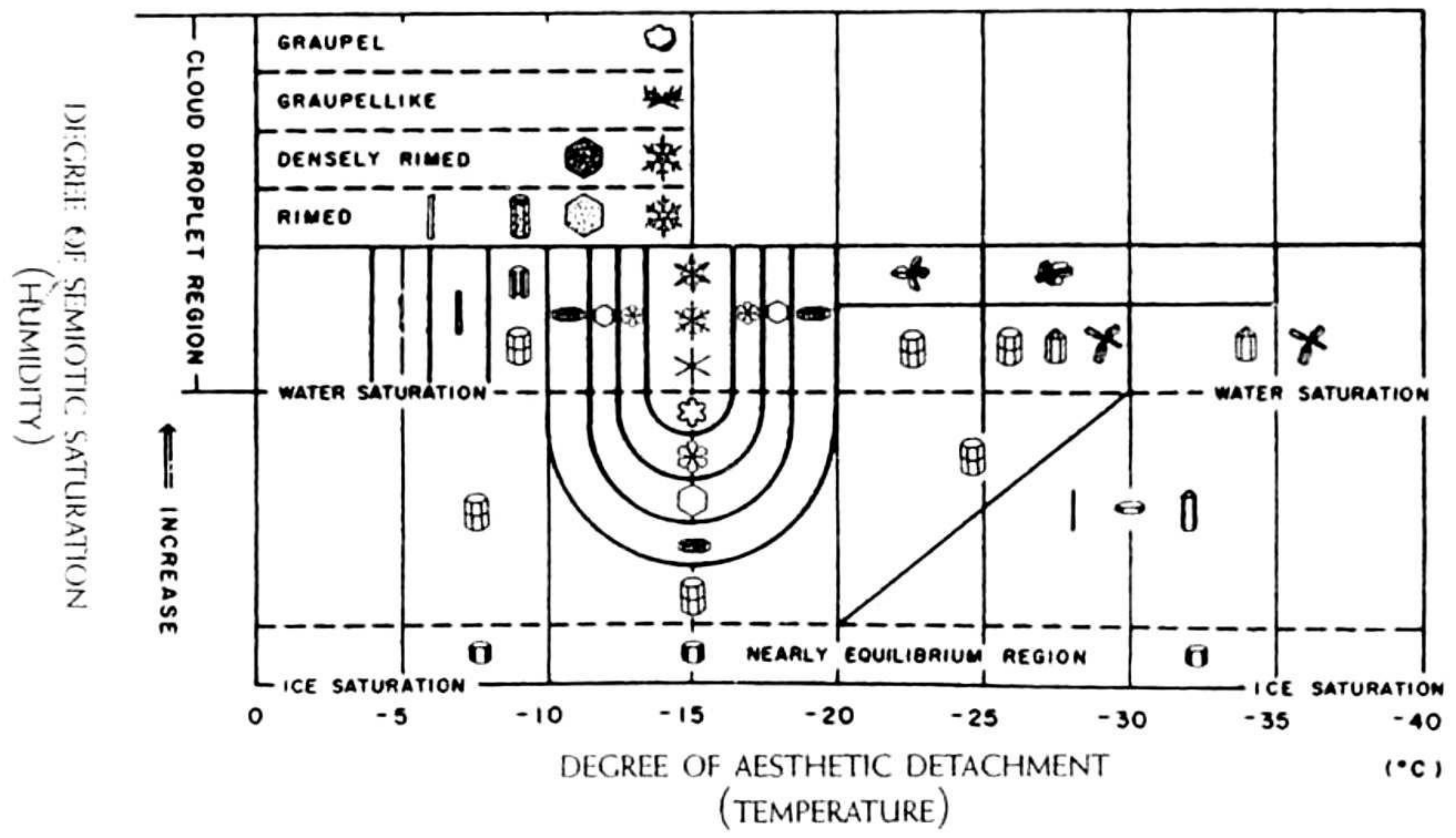
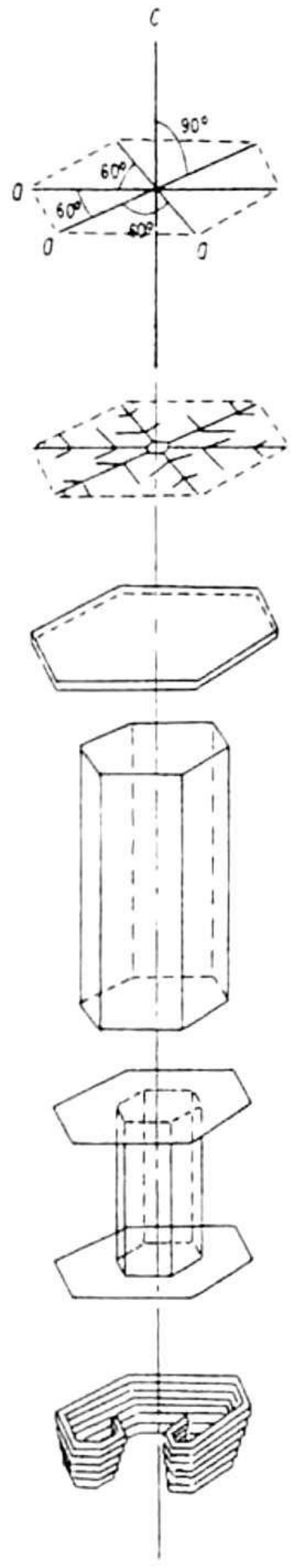

GRAUPEL
GRAUPELLIKE
DENSELY RIMED
RIMED
WATER SATURATION
WATER SATURATION
NEARLY EQUILIBRIUM REGION
ICE SATURATION
ICE SATURATION
CLOUD DROPLET REGION
INCREASE
DEGREE OF SEMIOTIC SATURATION
(HUMIDITY)
0
-5
-10
-15
-20
-25
-30
-35
-40
DEGREE OF AESTHETIC DETACHMENT
(TEMPERATURE)
(°C)

Figure 2.2: A diagram indicating the meteorological conditions necessary for the crystallization of poetic forms.


c
90°
60°
60°
60°
a
a
a

Semiotic saturation increases from a solid state of monosemy
to a fluid state of polysemy until meaning etherealizes itself
in the region of cloud droplets. Solid columns (Cle) in the
region of near equilibrium represent the restricted economy
of grammatical referentiality, since such crystals maintain
a low state of semiotic saturation across the entire continuum
of aesthetic detachment. Poetry lies in zones of disequilibrium.

Temperatures above -10°C correspond approximately to romantic
versification, with scrolled columns (Cli) designating, for
example, the anamnestic analecta by both William Wordsworth and
Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Temperatures between -10°C and -20°C
correspond approximately to modernist experimentation, with
stellar dendrites (Ple) designating, for example, the anagogical
analecta by both T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. Temperatures below
-20°C correspond approximately to postmodernist instrumentation,
with crystal aggregates (S3) designating, for example, the
anagrammatic analecta by both Steve McCaffery and bpNichol.

Poetry that is rimed is often very prolix, but not very cool.
Blank sectors refer to regions in which poetic composition
is virtually impossible, since poetry that is very cool can
only reach a certain limit of semiotic saturation before it
must resort to rime and thereby forsake some of its coolness.
Graupel refers to the infinite semiosis of eloquent silence,
the transcendental nature of which is currently unfashionable.

Figure 2.2 situates itself within the vicinity of crystal S3.
See The Cryometric Index of Poetic Forms for more information.

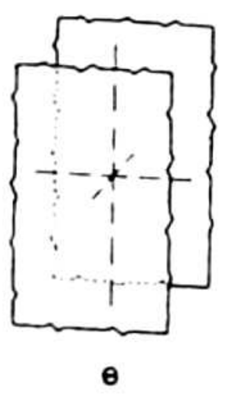
	RHYMISTIC	EURYTHMIC		MIMETIC	GRAMMATIC		PHONEMIC	CLYPHEMIC		POLYPHONIC	PARATACTIC		EMBRYONIC	ANATHEMATIC
N1a ELEMENTARY NEEDLE		●			●		●							
N1c ELEMENTARY SHEATH		●			●		●							
N1e LONG SOLID COLUMN		●		●	●		●							
C1c SOLID BULLET				●	●		●							●
C1d HOLLOW BULLET					●		●							●
C1e SOLID COLUMN				●	●		●							
C1f HOLLOW COLUMN					●		●							
C1g SOLID THICK PLATE				●				●						
C1h THICK PLATE OF SKELETON FORM								●					●	
C1i SCROLL					●		●						●	
C2a COMBINATION OF BULLETS					●		●			●				●
P1a HEXAGONAL PLATE				●				●						
P1b CRYSTAL WITH SECTOR BRANCHES		●		●				●		●				
P1c CRYSTAL WITH BROAD BRANCHES		●		●				●						
P1d STELLAR CRYSTAL		●			●		●			●				
P1e ORDINARY DENTRITIC CRYSTAL		●			●		●			●	●			
P1f FERNLIKE CRYSTAL		●			●		●			●	●			
S1 SIDE PLANES				●			●	●		●	●			
S3 COMBINATION OF PLANES & COLUMNS				●	●		●	●		●	●			●
R1a RIMED NEEDLE CRYSTAL	●	●			●		●							
R1b RIMED COLUMNAR CRYSTAL	●				●		●							
R1c RIMED PLATE	●			●				●						
R1d RIMED STELLAR CRYSTAL	●	●			●		●			●				
R2a DENSELY RIMED PLATE	●			●				●						
R2b DENSELY RIMED STELLAR CRYSTAL	●	●			●		●			●	●			
R3a GRAUPEL-LIKE HEXAGONAL SNOW	●						●			●	●			
R4a HEXAGONAL GRAUPEL														

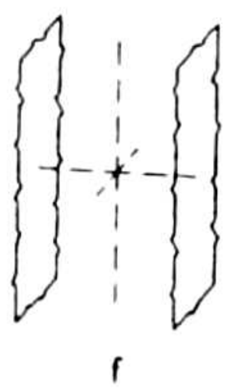
The Cryometric Index of Poetic Forms

CRYSTAL SYSTEM	SYMMETRY AXIS				CRYSTAL FORMATION
	Dia	Tri	Tet	Hex	
1. Triclinic	–	–	–	–	FGJLPQR
2. Monoclinic	1	–	–	–	AMTUVW, BCDEK, NSZ
3. Orthorhombic	3	–	–	–	HI
4. Isometric	(6)	4	(3)	–	–
5. Trigonal	(3)	1	–	–	Y
6. Tetragonal	(4)	–	1	–	OX
7. Hexagonal	(6)	–	–	1	–

Unbracketed numbers indicate the compulsory number of axes necessary for a crystal to a be a member of a given system.
Bracketed numbers indicate the maximum number of optional axes that can accompany the given number of mandatory axes

FIGURE 3.7: A table of crystal systems for classifying letters of the alphabet on the basis of axial symmetries.


e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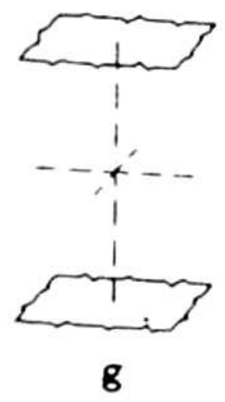

g

The axis of symmetry describes a (ma)thematical line that passes through the centre of any crystal such that rotation about this line through an arc of $360^{\circ}/n$ (where $n \in I$) causes the crystal to assume a final position congruent with its initial position. For $n = 1$, the crystal can achieve self-congruence by rotating 360° around an *identity* axis; for $n = 2$, the crystal can achieve self-congruence by rotating 180° around a *diad* axis; for $n = 3$, the crystal can achieve self-congruence by rotating 120° around a *triad* axis; for $n = 4$, the crystal can achieve self-congruence by rotating 90° around a *tetrad* axis; and for $n = 6$, the crystal can achieve self-congruence by rotating 60° around a *hexad* axis. No crystal exists with axes of symmetry for $n = 5$ or for $n > 6$.

The number of such axes of symmetry in a given letter determines the crystal system to which the letter belongs: the crystal H, for example, coincides with itself when rotated 180° through any one of three different orientations, and thus the letter belongs to the orthorhombic system, whose members typically have three such diad axes. The alphabet consists predominantly of monoclinic crystals, three types, all having a single diad axis of symmetry: a) three letters symmetrical only through the x-axis; b) five letters symmetrical only through the y-axis; and c) six letters symmetrical only through the z-axis. The triclinic system, the next most common system in the alphabet, contains letters with no axis of symmetry other than their infinite number of identity axes.

The science of crystallography suggests that both the isometric system and the hexagonal system do occur regularly in nature; however, no poet searching throughout the world of language has yet discovered a letter that fits into either system—a mystery that has led some crystallographers to speculate that crystals expressing such a rare degree of symmetry can only exist under the extremest, poetic conditions: perhaps the low temperatures found only in the remote voids of outer space; perhaps the high pressures found only in the dense cores of neutron stars—poetic conditions difficult for writers to reproduce in the laboratory.

RENÉ JUST-HAÜY (1743-1822)

A botanist, by chance dropping
calcite shards, beholds them shatter
into regular patterns, every piece
a tiny brick of glass for building,
stack by stack, crystallographic
prisonhouses: riot cells for souls.

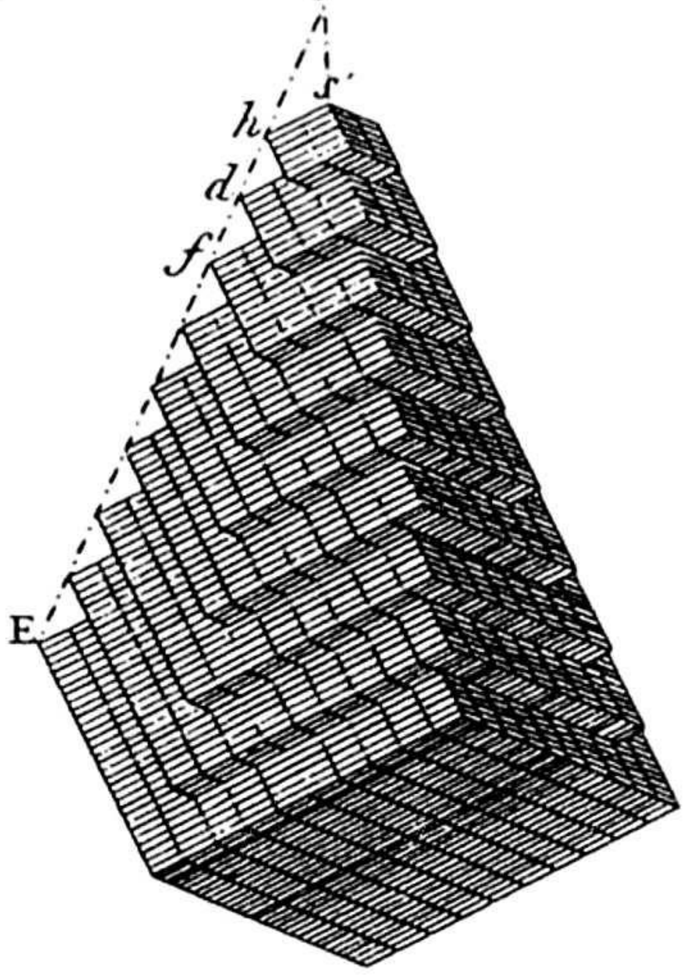


FIGURE 3.0: The polysyndeton of crystal polyhedrons.

Repetition of the same name and the same name and the same name
and the same name can benumb the mind to the sum of its meaning.

Crystals partition space with intersecting arrays
of parallel lines, and these lines woven together
form a lattice of letters that comprise all texts,
and all texts are trellises for the ivy of thought.

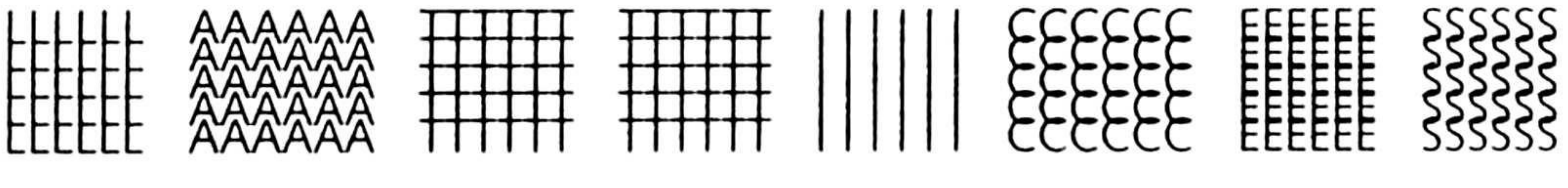
Lattices form crossword puzzles, diagramless and unsolvable.

Icelandic spar, despite its outward form, cracks
apart along its fracture planes into rhombohedra,
as if these words, when parsed, reveal themselves
to be composed of one letter constantly repeated.

Fractals shatter into smaller copies of their unbroken state.

"Speech" almost contains the word for its own "echoes."

A cube of salt is a mineral hologram.



Language functions as a wire grid in a window of reinforced glass.

W. H. Miller (1801-1880)

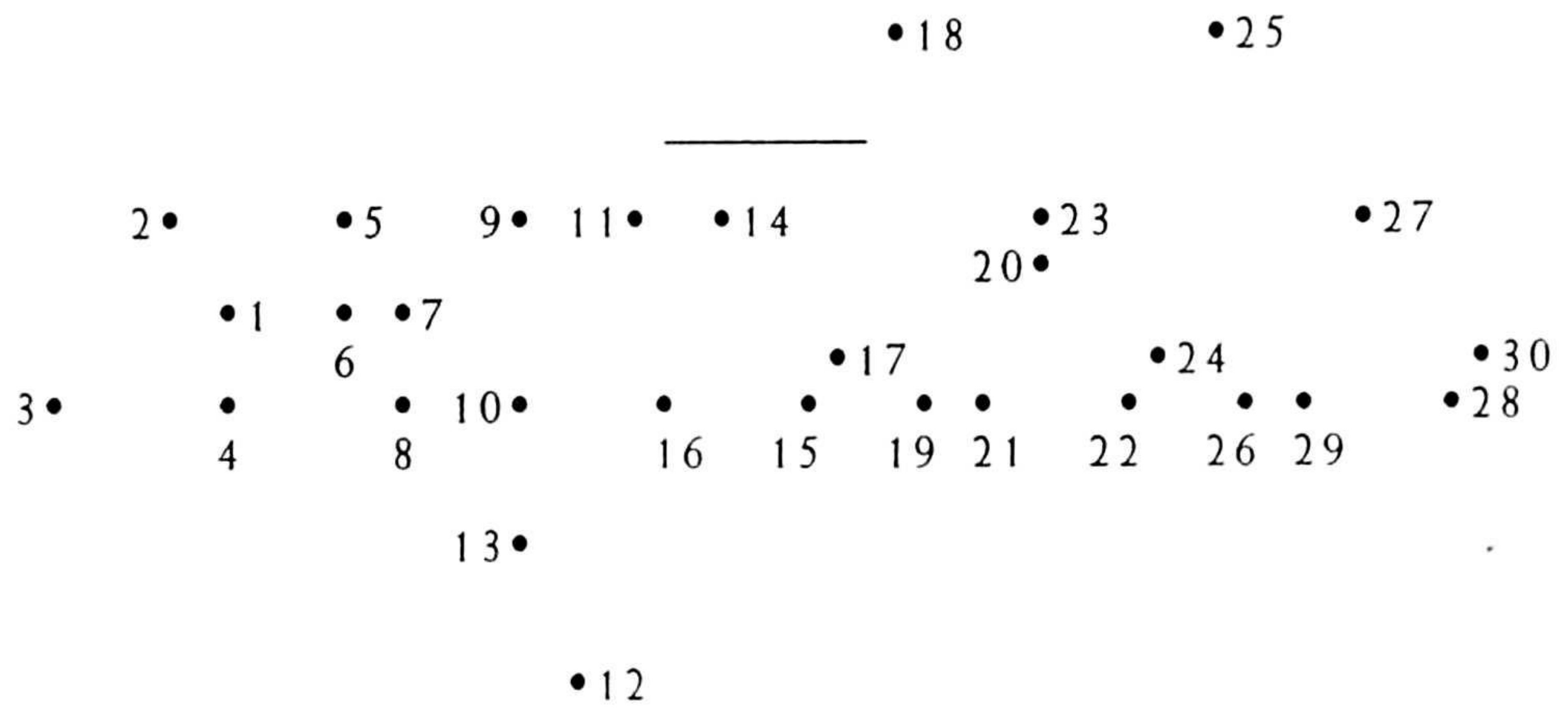
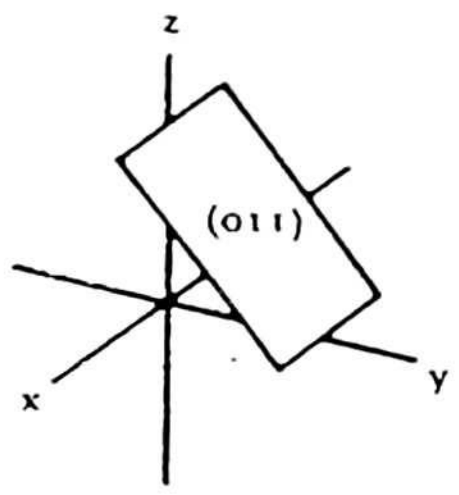

18
25
2
5
9
11
14
23
27
20
1
6
7
17
24
30
3
4
8
10
16
15
19
21
22
26
29
28
13
12

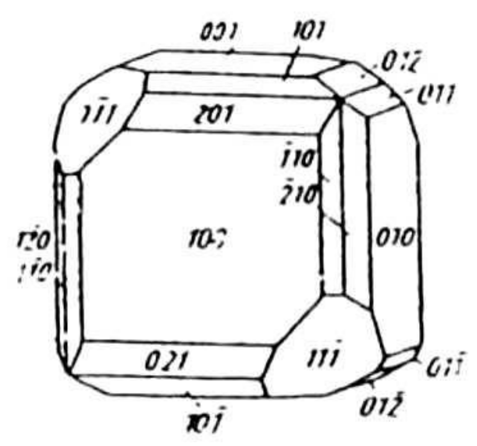
Figure 3.1: The constellation of stellar coordinates.

Crystallographers who wish to map the surface of a jewel
must see the outside of the earth on the inside of the sky.



Crystals are atlases of nothingness,
maps that correspond to no territory,
the world disappearing, but leaving
behind its latitudes and longitudes.

A dewey-decimal number triangulates the position of a facet
in an archive of surfaces, the law of indices banning texts
that make no sense in the rational language of low integers.


001
101
011
201
110
210
010
021
111

The map of a crystal is but a series
of values, a set of ratios, that do
not let you see the form so much as
show you how to rebuild it into view.

Planes are plans for panels and panes.

Crystallographers play connect-the-dots with these galaxies
of thought that emerge from the cloud chambers of a darkroom.

The last 3 letters of the alphabet contain the entirety of space.

AUGUSTE BRAVAIS (1811-1863)

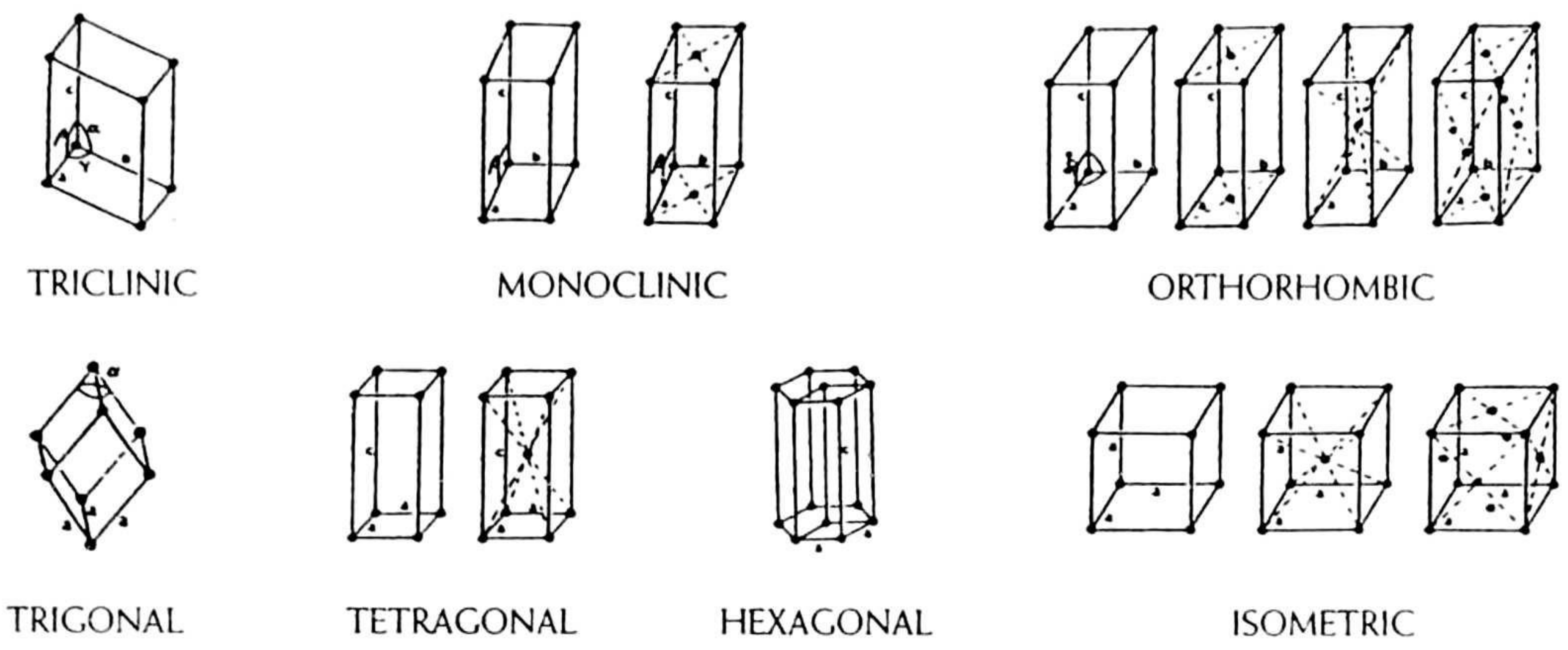


FIGURE 3.2: The declensions of geometric grammar.

Crystals maintain their rigid structure by permitting
all parts to tear the whole away from all other parts.

Lattices map a stable configuration of lines
within a closed system of semiotic relations,
every vertex, a node of tension, suspended,
like a letter among syllables, inside these
forcefields generated by every other vertex.

Geometry proves that only fourteen types of stalemate
can occur during endgames for such atomic tug-of-wars.

A typical crystal takes the form of an atomic acrostic.

ATOM CUBE UNIT CELL
TRIO USER NOTE EPEE
OILS BERG ITEM LETS
MOST ERGO TEMP LEST

Lattices distribute points in space in the same way
that poetic metre distributes stress across a line.

Lattices embody units of structural symmetry
inside gridlocked circuits of communication.

Tinkertoys permit children to learn through intuition
the atomic fundamentals of crystalline architecture.

FRIEDRICH MOHS (1773-1839)

NUMERICAL SCALE OF HARDNESS

0	DIAMOND	ELOHIM
9	CORUNDUM	SERAPHIM
8	TOPAZ	OPHANIM
7	QUARTZ	CHERUBIM
6	ORTHOCLASE	SHINNANIM
5	APATITE	TARSHISHIM
4	FLUORITE	HASHMALLIM
3	CALCITE	MALAKIM
2	GYPSUM	ARELIM
1	TALC	ZILIM

EACH MINERAL ABRADED BY ALL MINERALS ABOVE IT ABRADES ONLY ITSELF AND ALL MINERALS BELOW IT.

FIGURE 3.3: The celestial hierarchy of mineralogy.

Writing represents the damage endured by one surface
when it inflicts damage upon the surface of another.

A pretty word, like "fluorite," is too soft a gem
for sale since it suffers wear if worn as jewellery.

Words chip away at each other when jostled together.
Wor s hip   a   t eac   her when   led to   her.
W r   i   t e   her w e   l d   er.
W   i   t   h   e   r.
W   i   t
i   t
i

Angels reside inside the angles of galena.

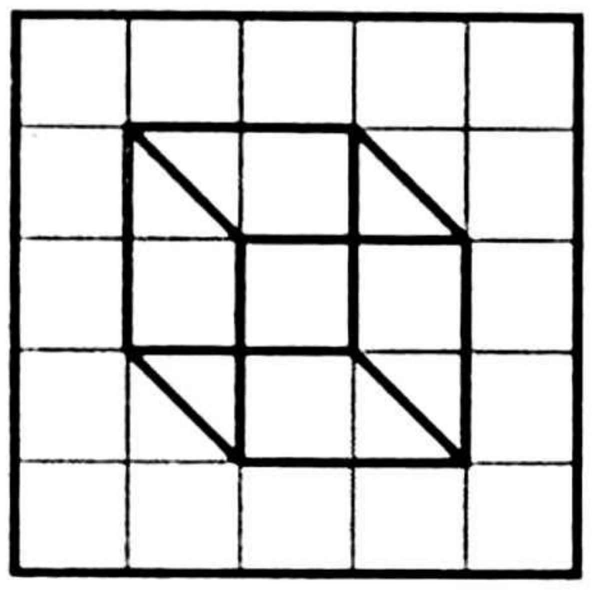
The neoplatonic universe resembles a glass onion
in which each layer swivels around a rotten core,
the wormeaten cosmos a mere chrysalis for a god
doomed to climb heavenward on a ladder of finite
rungs by transferring the bottom ones to the top.

The great chain of being is deoxyribonucleic.

A chromosome enciphers the base sequences for its own
genetic information in the form of aperiodic crystals.

SOFT → SORT → SORE → CORE → CORD → CARD → HARD

L. A. NECKER (1786-1861)



The cube exists in two dimensions
at the same time, while appearing
to shift at random back and forth
between them without ever seeming
to occupy both dimensions at once.

FIGURE 3.4: The optical paronomasia of crystallography.

The rubric of the cube has the ambiguity of a homonym.

The mind cannot register both meanings of the homonym
at the same time, but oscillates indecisively between
two contradictory interpretations of the same message.

The cube depicts the crystalline analog of a photon,
since light is paradoxically both particle and wave,
the universe taking delight in its own quantum puns.

LIGHT IS NOT HEAVY.

A homonym generates interference patterns that atomic
physicists can use to explain cosmological principles.

A tear in content times lies or winds to scale its lead.

The poet puts quarts of quartz in barrels of beryls.

The two words "two words" are either both "either"
and "or" or both "both" and "and," unless either
of both words are either two "words" or one "two."

The word at the end of this sentence is meaningless.

MAX VON LAUE (1879-1960)

X-rays transmit at wavelengths
short enough for them to slip
through the spaces, angstroms
wide, between the prison-bars
of all the cages in a crystal,
all its walls, electric fences,
all its cells, blackboxes lit
by a burst of invisible light.

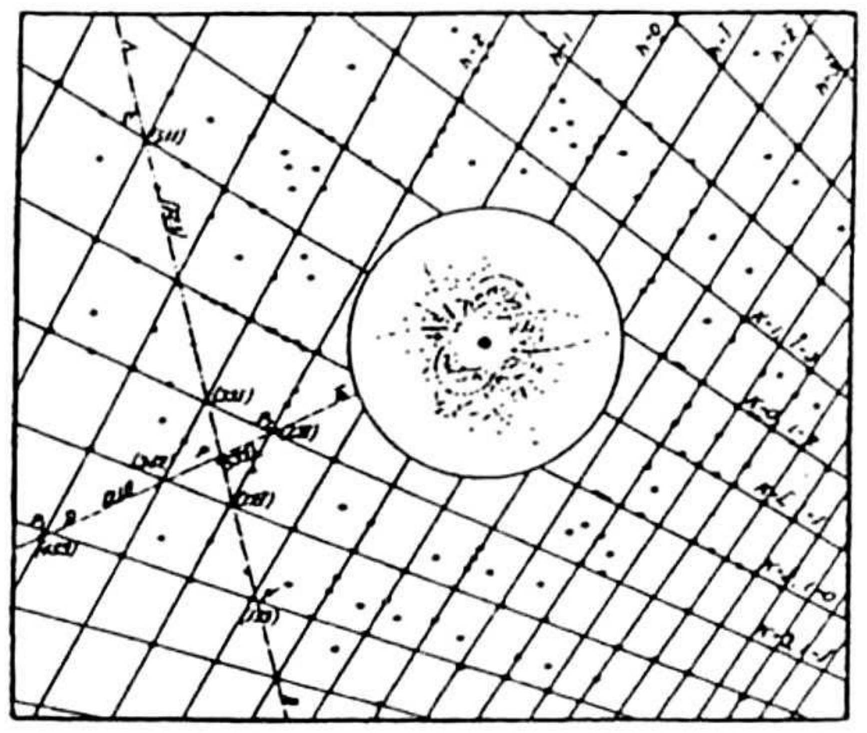
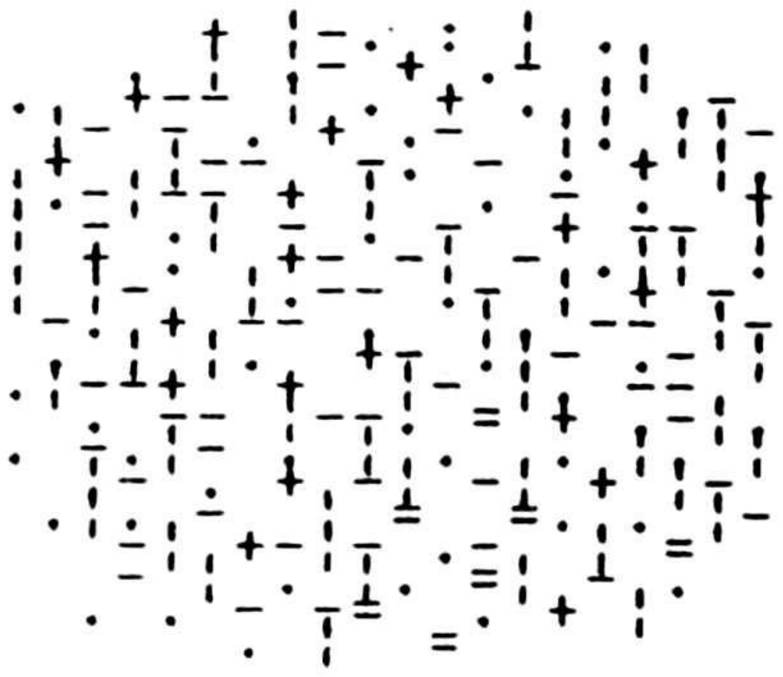
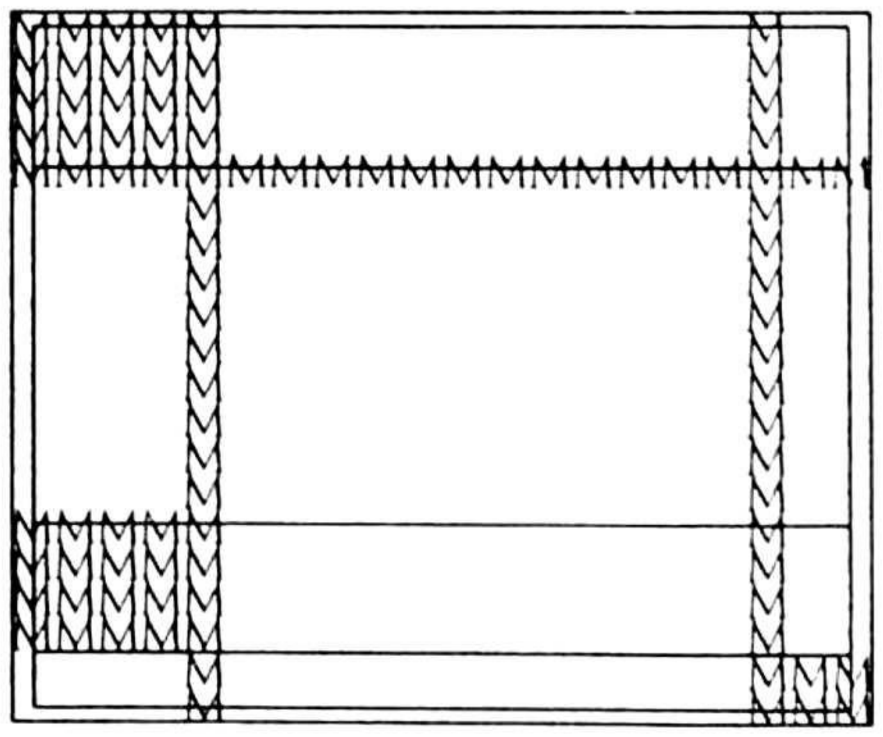


Figure 3.5: The gnomonic projection of textuality.

X-rays passing through the atomic scaffolding of a crystal
cast the pointillistic shadows of its form across the page.

Mondrian paintings often depict the scatter patterns
of a particle beam that collides with sodium chloride.





Writing represents an obsolete machine for catscanning
drops of frost that glitter in a spiderweb of dreams.

An infectious virus, like an idea, is nothing but a biotic
crystal that can mutate into life when exposed to radiation.

The gossamer ghost of a skull gazes out from black celluloid.

A crystal creates a sieve for the meaning that reveals it.

W. L. BRAGG (1890-1971)

X-ray machines conduct aerial
surveys of an alien terrain
so infinitesimal in its scale
that it exists as a texture
without surface, as a ripple
without water, the photograph
showing the stillness of wind
within the silkiness of space.

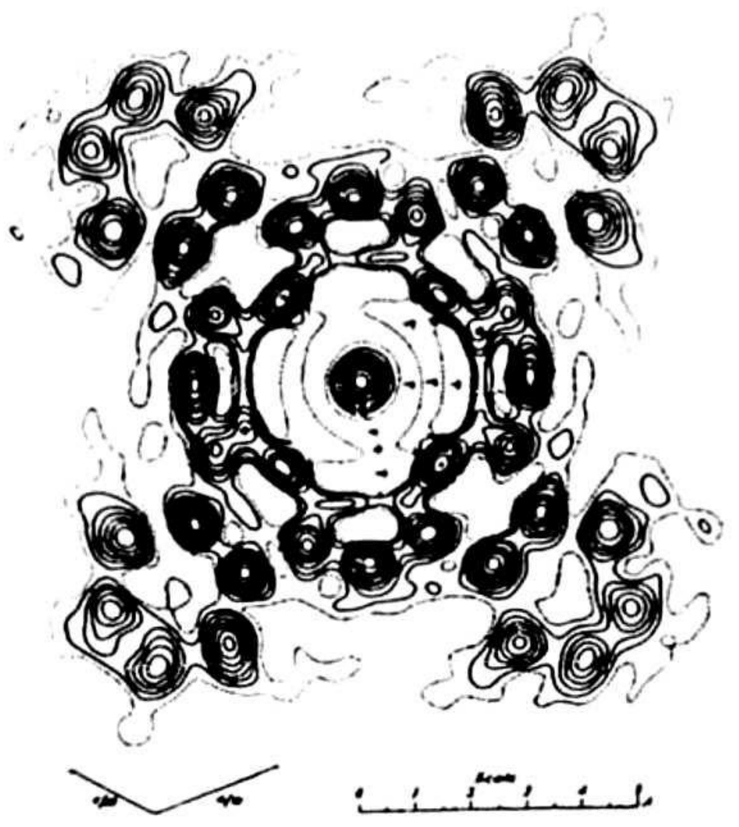


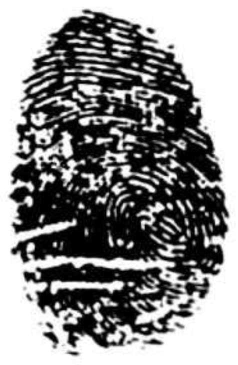
FIGURE 3.6: The subatomic topography of glossematics.

X-ray machines illuminate a secret with a light that no one sees,
the sound of the secret recognizable in the shape of its silence.

A stellar cluster seen on the computer screen of a radio telescope
almost divulges the crystalline structure of a microscopic cosmos.

Each one of us emits an infra-red aura as unique as a signature.

The loops and whorls of fingerprints
look like the contours found on maps
that depict the fields of influence
for electrons in a crystal of amino
acid from which genes can reproduce
the loops and whorls of fingerprints.



Crystals preserve immobile cyclones in their vacuum tubes.

The isograms of stormfronts propagate in waves across the page.

The moiré effect occurs when two lattices with a fine grain
overlap at a slightly skewed angle so that for a few seconds
they produce the illusion of motion amid the fixity of lines.

Morning sunlight turns swimming pools into melting kaleidoscopes.

Henry David Thoreau

The Railway Embankment in Spring

Few phenomena gave me more delight than to observe the forms which thawing sand and clay assume in flowing down the sides of a deep cut on the railroad through which I passed on my way to the village, a phenomenon not very common on so large a scale, though the number of freshly exposed banks of the right material must have been greatly multiplied since railroads were invented. The material was sand of every degree of fineness and of various rich colors, commonly mixed with a little clay. When the frost comes out in the spring, and even in a thawing day in the winter, the sand begins to flow down the slopes like lava, sometimes bursting out through the snow and overflowing it where no sand was to be seen before. Innumerable little streams overlap and interlace one with another, exhibiting a sort of hybrid product, which obeys half way the law of currents, and half way that of vegetation. As it flows it takes the forms of sappy leaves or vines, making heaps of pulpy sprays a foot or more in depth, and resembling, as you look down on them, the laciniated lobed and imbricated thalluses of some lichens; or you are reminded of coral, of leopards' paws or birds' feet, of brains or lungs or bowels, and excrements of all kinds. It is a truly *grotesque* vegetation, whose forms and color we see imitated in bronze, a sort of architectural foliage more ancient and typical than acanthus, chiccory, ivy, vine, or any vegetable leaves; destined perhaps, under some circumstances, to become a puzzle to future geologists. The whole cut impressed me as if it were a cave with its stalactites laid open to the light. The various shades of the sand are singularly rich and agreeable, embracing the different iron colors, brown, gray, yellowish, and reddish. When the flowing mass reaches the drain at the foot of the bank it spreads out flatter into *strands,* the separate streams losing their semi-cylindrical form and gradually becoming more flat and broad, running together as they are more moist, till they form an almost flat *sand,* still variously and beautifully shaded, but in which you can trace the original forms of vegetation; till at length, in the water itself, they are converted into *banks,* like those formed off the mouths of rivers, and the forms of vegetation are lost in the ripple marks on the bottom.

The whole bank, which is from twenty to forty feet high, is sometimes overlaid with a mass of this kind of foliage, or sandy rupture, for a quarter of a mile on one or both sides, the produce of one spring day. What makes this sand foliage remarkable is its springing into existence thus suddenly. When I see on the one side the inert bank,—for the sun acts on one side first,—and on the other this luxuriant foliage, the creation of an hour, I am affected as if in a peculiar sense I stood in the laboratory of the Artist who made the world and me,—had come to where he was still at work, sporting on this bank, and with excess of energy strewing his fresh designs about. I feel as if I were nearer to the vitals of the globe, for this sandy overflow is something such a foliaceous mass as the vitals of the animal body. You find thus in the very sands an anticipation of the vegetable leaf. No wonder that the earth expresses itself outwardly in leaves, it so labors with the idea inwardly. The atoms have already learned this law, and are pregnant by it. The overhanging leaf sees here its prototype. *Internally,* whether in the globe or animal body, it is a moist thick *lobe,* a word especially applicable to the liver and lungs and the *leaves* of fat, (λείβω, *labor, lapsus,* to flow or slip downward, a lapsing; λοβος, *globus,* lobe, globe; also lap, flap, and many other words,) *externally* a dry thin *leaf,* even as the *f* and *v* are a pressed and dried *b.* The radicals of lobe are *lb,* the soft mass of the *b* (single lobed, or B, double lobed,) with a liquid *l* behind it pressing it forward. In globe, *glb,* the guttural *g* adds to the meaning the capacity of the throat. The feathers and wings of birds are still drier and thinner leaves. Thus, also, you pass from the lumpish grub in the earth to the airy and fluttering butterfly. The very globe continually transcends and translates itself, and becomes winged in its orbit. Even ice begins with delicate crystal leaves, as if it had flowed into moulds which the fronds of water plants have impressed on the watery mirror. The whole tree itself is but one leaf, and rivers are still vaster leaves whose pulp is intervening earth, and towns and cities are the ova of insects in their axils.

When the sun withdraws the sand ceases to flow, but in the morning the streams will start once more and branch and branch again into a myriad of others. You here see perchance how blood vessels are formed. If you look closely you observe that first there pushes forward from the thawing mass a stream of softened sand with a drop-like point, like the ball of the finger, feeling its way slowly and blindly downward, until at last with more heat and moisture, as the sun gets higher, the most fluid portion, in its effort to obey the law to which the most inert also yields, separates from the latter and forms for itself a meandering channel or artery within that, in which is seen a little silvery stream glancing like lightning from one stage of pulpy leaves or branches to another, and ever and anon swallowed up in the sand. It is wonderful how rapidly yet perfectly the sand organizes itself as it flows, using the best material its mass affords to form the sharp edges of its channel. Such are the sources of rivers. In the silicious matter which the water deposits is perhaps the bony system, and in the still finer soil and organic matter the fleshy fibre or cellular tissue. What is man but a mass of thawing clay? The ball of the human finger is but a drop congealed. The fingers and toes flow to their extent from the thawing mass of the body. Who knows what the human body would expand and flow out to under a more genial heaven? Is not the hand a spreading *palm* leaf with its lobes and veins? The ear may be regarded, fancifully, as a lichen, *umbilicaria,* on the side of the head, with its lobe or drop. The lip (*labium* from *labor* (?)) laps or lapses from the sides of the cavernous mouth. The nose is a manifest congealed drop or stalactite. The chin is a still larger drop, the confluent dripping of the face. The cheeks are a slide from the brows into the valley of the face, opposed and diffused by the cheek bones. Each rounded lobe of the vegetable leaf, too, is a thick and now loitering drop, larger or smaller; the lobes are the fingers of the leaf; and as many lobes as it has, in so many directions it tends to flow, and more heat or other genial influences would have caused it to flow yet farther.

Thus it seemed that this one hillside illustrated the principle of all the operations of Nature. The Maker of this earth but patented a leaf. What Champollion will decipher this hieroglyphic for us, that we may turn over a new leaf at last? This phenomenon is more exhilarating to me than the luxuriance and fertility of vineyards. True, it is somewhat excrementitious in its character, and there is no end to the heaps of liver lights and bowels, as if the globe were turned wrong side outward; but this suggests at least that Nature has some bowels, and there again is mother of humanity. This is the frost coming out of the ground; this is Spring. It precedes the green and flowery spring, as mythology precedes regular poetry. I know of nothing more purgative of winter fumes and indigestions. It convinces me that Earth is still in her swaddling clothes, and stretches forth baby fingers on every side. Fresh curls spring from the baldest brow. There is nothing inorganic. These foliaceous heaps lie along the bank like the slag of a furnace, showing that Nature is "in full blast" within. The earth is not a mere fragment of dead history, stratum upon stratum like the leaves of a book, to be studied by geologists and antiquaries chiefly, but living poetry like the leaves of a tree, which precede flowers and fruit,—not a fossil earth, but a living earth; compared with whose great central life all animal and vegetable life is merely parasitic. Its throes will heave our exuviæ from their graves. You may melt your metals and cast them into the most beautiful moulds you can; they will never excite me like the forms which this molten earth flows out into. And not only it, but the institutions upon it, are plastic like clay in the hands of the potter.

Jean-Pierre Brisset

Memorialized by Breton in Anthologie de l'humour noir, *a portfolio of Surrealism's predecessors, Brisset (1857–1923) irritates or mesmerizes depending on one's tolerance for homophonic excess. Brisset's work is unjustly reduced to his denial of the existence of Latin and his thesis that human speech derives from frogs. Amateur philologist and logophile, he adheres to two seemingly contradictory positions: that language is logical, and that the pun affords insight into divine will. "The sword of fire which guarded the way to the tree of life is called punning or word-play." Brisset accordingly takes the plunge, noting the homophonic resemblance of "grammaire" and "grand-mère" and ascertaining that grandmother grammar originates in the sea ("mer"), a primal solution and a primal scene in the Freudian sense, given Brisset's tendency to conflate sex and speech. While the thesis of aquatic origins is hardly aberrant, Brisset's "logic" is unwittingly 'pataphysical. His avowed principle:* "All ideas uttered with similar sounds have the same origin and all refer, in principle, to the same object." *In practice this homophonic affirmation yields the following:*

"l'eau j'ai" (I have water)
"l'haut j'ai" (I am high—Brisset's interpretation)
"l'os j'ai" (I have a bone)
"le au jet" (where I throw that object—Brisset)
"loge ai" (I have a lodge)
"lot j'ai" (I bear my lot)
"l'auge ai" (I have my trough)

For Brisset, as Michel Pierssens observes, "everything takes place as if human language were but a disguised, misunderstood glossolalia: everyone 'speaks in tongues,' at every instant"—but it takes a certain slapstick ingenuity to sort out the heterogeneity of speech into typological paradigms like the above gloss on "logé" (lodging). Some would argue that only an act of lunacy would base a cosmological thesis on the result. Brisset audaciously titled two of his books La science de Dieu *(1900) and* Les origines humaine *(1907). Jean-Jacques Lecercle vindicates Brisset by turning his name into a verb: if he seems to do violence to language, the violence is originally language's, "because language itself Brissetizes." To "brissetize" would then be to behold the original chthonic turbulence of language take shape by loosening the reins (*rènes*) of syntax and watching the rain fall from the* reine-mère, *the frog queen mother of us all. In this atomic shower, the clinamen of Mallarmé's dice returns in Foucault's evocation: "A l'origine, ce que Brisset découvre, ce n'est pas un ensemble limité de mots simples fortement* *attachés à leur référence, mais la langue . . . à l'état de jeu, au moment où les sons roulent encore, laissant voir leurs faces successives" (In the beginning, Brisset discovers, there was not a limited group of simple words firmly fixed to their reference, but . . . language only in a state of play, at the point where sounds are still rolling, showing their successive sides). In Brisset's own work the dice are still rolling.*

* * *

Caveat lector (translators' note): As Michel Foucault observes in his preface to a recent edition of La science de Dieu *and* La grammaire logique, *one of the fundamental principles of Brisset's composition is that of untranslatability. Brisset cautions in his introduction to* La science de Dieu *that the text "cannot be entirely translated"; the warning is not an idle one. It is impossible to recreate in a translation the explosive force of Brisset's linguistic analyses, spiraling outward as they do from a single word into a phrase, a sentence, an episode, a myth of origins—into, eventually, a whole history and prehistory. Such a task is impossible, first of all because sound rather than sense—or sound at the moment where it is forced into collision with sense—is what guides the author's investigations into the birth of the French language, and thence, given the primordiality of the French tongue in Brisset's account, into the origins of all language. It is impossible, secondly, because the average translator, whether we praise his relative sanity or blame his prosaicism for the failure, cannot hope to match the sense of excess, of surplus, of the clamorous engendering of words and ideas and ideas from words, that one encounters in the original text. Brisset's treatise could be "entirely" rendered only by an equally nonconformist translator; and there is no assurance (we might cite here Antonin Artaud's translation of Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky" as case in point) that such a translation, although perhaps closer in spirit to the original, would have any more success in reaching the nonclinicable public.*

The following translation, as Brisset foresaw, does not do justice to the systematic chaos of the author's own text. It is important to keep in mind while reading the translation that most of La science de Dieu *depends upon, and is generated from, a homophony of French terms, and that this homophony cannot be recreated in English since it is obviously impossible to translate simultaneously both the sense and the sound of Brisset's original work.*

Take, for instance, Brisset's delicate anatomization of one of the treatise's seminal terms: sexe. *From the three sounds that make up the word's verbal signifier s-e-x (rendered phonetically, in French as in English, /səks/), Brisset unearths an exchange that once lay hidden, atavistically, in the first stirrings of the French language: "Ce exe, sais que ce?" "Sexe." "Sais que c'est?" "Ce exe est." "Sexe est." "Ce excès, c'est le sexe." Phonetically, each of these phrases is a variation on the theme of the word 'sex,' a drawing out of the sound /səks/, much as a diva might prolong the word over several keys and octaves, or a scat singer might extend the sound over different beats and rhythms.*

The difficulty in translating lies in the fact that if we submit the English word 'sex' to a similar technique of extension and dissection, the word's constituent sounds will not follow the same semantic *paths as in French. One way of proceeding would be to try to translate Brisset's method, rather than the sense of his text. One could, for example, produce anagrams for 'sex'—or for 'sexual,' as this gives us a few more syllables with which to work—and, bypassing Brisset's own phonetic-semantic channels, trace a route along the various paths that open before us in English: 'Sea lux' (obliquely recalling Brisset's thesis that the ancestor frog emerged from the water), 'Lacks use' (the sex was an excess). (Wordsmith [wsmith@wordsmith.org], an on-line anagram-generating program, produced the following anagrams for 'sexual': ale sux, axle us, alex us, sea lux, lax use, lax sue, as luxe.) But even if one were to select anagrams that remained as close as possible to Brisset's text, it is doubtful that the reader would garner a faithful image of the original through such a translation. Alternatively, one could explore concurrently several possibilities evoked by Brisset's text, mapping out the relations between sound and sense and the connections and contingencies to which these lead. But in this case, it is readability that would be sacrificed; and while Brisset's text may be complex, it remains a text rather than a diagram.*

Traduttore traditore: *all translations are impossible, and every translator, to some degree, is a traitor. Resigned to this, we have tried to strike a compromise between remaining faithful to the meaning of Brisset's original text and exploiting phonetic similarities between French and English wherever it seemed appropriate.*

The Origin of Language from Our Ancestor Frogs

First Exercises and Means of Existence

. . . All languages preserve the memory of the period during which we lived on flies.

. . . We still see our first ancestor living in the bogs and marshes; he comes up onto the ground, climbs into the sun. He is a hopper who lives on grasshoppers, on crickets, on anything that buzzes and especially flies. This ancestor, we have already called him by his name: he is the frog.

The Frog

Everyone knows that frogs don't have discernible sexual organs; they reproduce by spawning. Nevertheless, the male and female seek each other out fervently and clasp themselves together with such force that one can *size up* their *size* without having to separate them. The skin of the frog is naturally white. The sun colors it differently on the back and sides, but the underbelly remains white. When doctors graft this skin onto human flesh, it is easily accepted. The frog, serpent of old, changes his skin like the snake, and thus becomes completely white for a certain time. "He changed his skin but remained the same beast," as they used to say of him; and also, "shed one's skin," "change one's skin." This little hopper is entirely without hair.

The frog's neck is set into the shoulders so that he is incapable of turning his head. His eyes are found toward the back of the head, and his mouth extends up to the ears. The arms are short, so that to this day we appreciate the one with long arms. The frog has ten toes, whereas each hand has only four digits; the thumb is missing. The foot is not connected by any joint, but is rather an extension of the leg, and the heel is flexible. Lastly, the frog has no teeth.

Thus the frog has no sex, no thumb, no neck, neither hair nor teeth. The feet culminate in a double fish-tail, like the Tritons and Sirens of the fable.

The advent of the sex in this ancestor was the innovation that modified the frog's cry and gave it a perfect precision. It was at this moment that words as we know them were conceived, and they have never changed since.

It is impossible to analyze words created by sexual impetus without perturbing public modesty. Furthermore, this would take years and multiple volumes. We will, however, analyze the word 'sex' in this book, which is in fact a very pure word, incapable of offending the ear or the sensibility of anyone, a word created by angels, the first creatures of the Eternal God.

The Formation of the Sex

Let us first remark that it is possible to change the place of the words in a sentence without modifying the idea expressed: *la porte est ouverte* [the door is open] and *porte est ouverte là* [the door is open there] still say *ouverte est la porte* [open is the door]. The same principle held for: *à le* [to the (masc.)] which was equivalent to *le à* [the (masc.) to] = *là* [there] and *ale* [ale] also being equatable with *là* [there].

When we accept this, we read: *ai que ce?* [(I) have that this?] with the value of: *ce qu'ai?* [that that (I) have?] or *qu'ai ce?* = *qu'ai-je?* [that (I) have this? = that have I?]. This was said on *ce quai* [this dock] which the ancestor occupied. The questions: *ai que ce?* [(I) have that this?], *est que ce?* [is that this?] were expressed *ai* [(I) have] or *est quoi ici?* [is what here?] and created the name of *sexe* [sex]. Some would pronounce it: *éqce;* others: *èqce,* according to the generative sentence: *ai que ce? est que ce?* [have (I) that this? is it that this?]. Whence the word sex is pronounced either *séqce* or *sèqce. Ec, éque* or *ek,* formed from: *ai que?* [have (I) that?] is even a first name for sex: *éque-ce* [(?)-this] equatable with *ce éque, ec* or *ek* [this (?)] and became *exe* [ex].

The question was then asked: *ce exe, sais que ce?* [this ex, do (you/I) know what this?] = this point, do you know what it is? which became: sex.—*Sais que c'est?* [do (you/I) know what it is?], *ce exe est* [this ex is], *sexe est* [sex is], *ce excès* [this excess], it's (the) sex.—We see that the sex was the first excess. There is no excess to fear among those who have no sex. In: *ce exe est* [this ex is], we can analyze: 'this' or 'this here' is an 'ex'; and: 'ex is this' or 'this here.' Continuing, we see that 'this' shows and designates first of all the sex. Also, *ce ek-ce* [this (?)] = this sex here: sex. *Eh, è, é,* is also a first name for the sex: *Ce que c'est? Sexe est* [what it is? It's sex].

Je ne sais que c'est. Jeune sexe est. [I don't know what it is, young sex is.] The first thing that the ancestor noticed and that he did not recognize was a young sex, a sex in formation. In this case the most clairvoyant people are still sometimes forced to say: *Je ne sais que c'est* [I don't know what it is]. *Jeune sexe est* [young sex is] equals: *sexe est jeune* [sex is young] and *jeune est sexe* [sex is young (sounds like 'I have no sex')]. The word 'young' can be considered a noun. As a result, 'young' designates and will designate those who took a sex. The young are children whose member has not yet attained all of its power, for it always develops very slowly.

Tu sais que c'est bien. Tu sexe est bien. [You know that it is good, you sex is good.] The word *tu* [you], like young, also indicates the sex. It is a childish term: hide your *tu,* your *tutu. Tu tu* = your sex. *'Tu relues tu tu'* ['you're eying your sex']. *'Turlututu'* ['no way'], repeated with vexation the one who was the object of this hurtful remark.

Y ce ai que c'est? Il sait que c'est. Y sais que c'est. Y sexe est. [It this (I) have that is it? he knows that it is, it (you/I) know that it is, it sex is.] *Y* referred first of all to the sex, then meant 'I' and finally 'he.' *Y le sexe est. Il sait que c'est.* [It the sex is, he knows what it is.]

On sait que c'est. On sexe est. [One knows what it is, one sex is.] The pronoun 'one' designated the sex and had the significance of *en, en ce lieu, en ce l'yeu* [in, in this place, in this the eye], in that eye there. The sex presented itself in the form *d'yeu* [of eye (sounds like 'God')] or of eyes. It was a slight opening. The pronoun 'one' is indefinite and all words that it can replace referred to the sex, the origin of all living speech: Pierre, Jean, Julie, etc. *sait que c'est bien* [knows that it's good] and *sexe est bien* [sex is good]. Everything that can know something is necessarily in its origin a sex, a member of the human or divine family.

Je sais que c'est bien. Je ou jeu sexe est bien. [I know that it's good, I or game sex is good.] The first game was sex. The passion of the game arises from this. The prudent individual hid his game. The pronoun 'I' thus designates the sex, and when the 'I' speaks, it's a sex, a virile member of the Eternal God that acts by will or by permission. It was in speaking of his sex that the ancestor noticed that he was speaking about his own person, about himself.

A = ai. Que ce a? = qu'ai-je?—Que ça ou çà? = Quoi cela? Que exe est que ce a? = Quel sexe est que j'ai? Que excès que a! Qu'est-ce? que sexe a. Que sexe a? Qu'ai? que sexe a? [I have, what this (he) has? = what do I have?—that that or here? = what that? what exe is that this has? what sex is that I have? what excess that (he) has! What is it? that (he) has sex, that (he) has sex? what do (I) have? what sex does (he) have?] *Kékséksa? Que aie ce que c'est que ce a?* [that (I/you) might have what it is that this has?] = Here see or take that which I have. Its unfamiliarity changed the command into a question: *Qu 'est-ce que c'est que ça?* [what is that?] These analyses by themselves will suffice to show, by the Infallible Law that guides us in our work, that our most familiar question is born with these beings who take the sex and who know nothing of this ex-crescence, this ex-tension. Today, one can at most be embarrassed for the gender.

Je me exe à mine ai. Tu te exe à mine as. Y ce exe à mine a. Y sexe à mine a. Y le sexe a mine à. [I have ex with mine/mien, you have *exe* with mine/mien, it has this *exe* with mine/mien, it the sexe has mine/mien with.] It is the sex *à la mine* [with the mine/mien] or *à la main* [in the hand] which the ancestor *s'examinait* [(s)examined], *sexe à mine ai* [sex of mine/mien have (I)]. *Mine* [mine/mien] signified *main* [hand]. The hand made a face and mined the ground. *Che mine* [(?) mine], *chemine* [(he) walks]; *che main* [(?) hand], *chemin* [path], also said: *ici la main* [here is the hand]. Thus the creator of '*je m'examinai*' [I examined myself], etc. was saying: *J 'ai mon sexe à la main* [I have my sex in my hand], etc. It was in examining his sex that the ancestor used to make *son examen* [his examination], *son exe à main* [his ex in hand], *son nexe à main* [his *nexe* in hand]. The examination of the sex is the first that one undergoes upon coming into the world.

In *examiner, examen,* etc., 'ex' is pronounced: *égze.* This change demonstrates to us that: *gue = que* [that], *ze = ce* [this]. The inversion of *égze* gives *ze gu'ai = ce qu'a* [(?) = that which (he) has]. *Gu'ai = j'ai* [(?) = I have] and formed *gai, gué, guet* [gay, ford, watch]. The sex made one 'gay'; the aquatic ancestor used to make his calls on the 'ford' where they were 'standing watch.' It is on this ford that the knights of the watch used to engage in combat. Each family of ancestors defended his ford and his marsh.—Since *ze = ce,* to understand perfectly words with the sound 'ze,' we have to reinstate its old value of 'ce.' He is always *à zézayer* [lisping], meant: *à s'essayer* [trying his hand (at something)]. He who tried, lisped. *A sesse eille ai, à zéze eille ai* [(?), (?)] = by the sex (I/you) see what I have. *Sesse* and *zéze* thus indicated the sex. Italian: *il sesse ho* = I have the sex; *il sesso* = the sex. *Ce esse: ce exe: sesse: sexe.* [This hook or linchpin, this ex, (?), sex]

Ce meant the sex: *ce ai, ai ce, esse* [this (I) have, (I) have this, ?]. We noted that *on* [one] was equivalent to *en* [in], in this place. *On ce ai c'est* [one this (I) have it is] = this in that I have. *On ce esse est, on ce esse aie. On sesse est, on sesse aie. On sait c'est. On ce essaie, on s'essaie.* [One this hook is, one this hook might have, one is (?), one might have (?)]. *On ce essaie* [one this tries] clearly shows 'ce' presenting the sex and uniting with the one who is speaking in the phrase: *on s'essaie* [one tries]. Similarly, *l'on ce sexe à mine a, l'on s'examina* [one has this sex with mine/mien, one examined oneself]. The German pronoun *Sich* = one and is formed from: *ce ich* = this me and points to the sex as does *soi* [the self or oneself]. *Ce ois* [this (?)] = look at this, the *ce* [this] or *sexe* [sex]. 'Self' is thus the equivalent of 'sex.' The first ancestor spoke of nothing else. It is still the basis of conversation for demons.

Thus the pronouns trace their origin back to the ancestor's reflection on his own nudity. All that is figurative speech today was in the beginning applied to material acts. It was necessary that the word be formed before the mind carried it into the realm of pure thought.

Qu'ist ce exe que l'eus? Qu'ist sexe que l'eus or *l'ai?* [What (?) this exe that (he) had it? what (?) sex that (I) had or have?] In primitive times, the past tenses of verbs were present tenses. 'I had it' was equivalent to 'I have it' and formed the definite past of the verb *lire* [to read]: *Je lus; tu l'eus, tu lus; il l'eut, il lut; nous l'eûmes, nous lûmes; vous l'eûtes, vous lûtes; ils lurent.* [I read; you had it, you read; he had it, he read; we had it, we read; you had it, you read; they had it.] The first ones who 'had it' [*l'eurent*] were 'with it' [*lurons*], and the first thing that they read [*lurent*] was sex. The sex was also the first lyre, it produced ire. It is there that it became necessary first to read [*lire*] in a state of delirium. The sex was thus the first cause of attraction and of repulsion. The question: *Qu'ist sexe que l'eus?* [what (?) sex that (I/you) had or have?] caused the ancestors to repulse one another, and they said: There they are, those ones who (s)exclude themselves. *Y sais que, ce que l'eus, est* [it knows that, that which (I/you) had, is] = I know that what I have is. *Y sexe que l'eus est* [it sex it is that (I/you) have] = it is there the sex that I have. Same sexes didn't go together, they (s)excluded each other.

The word 'sex' has drawn us far beyond our original intent. Each sound is an ancestor spirit who takes hold of the thinker and drives him from all sides among his relations, his parentage, and tells him of his birth and of his genealogy.

The key that we are supplying here permits the analysis of all spoken words, that is, of all languages. This took only a few pages. The science of speech is therefore not obscure, for a child can understand us. It is impossible to examine, to study this chapter and to reflect on it, or on its analyses, without the whole of one's soul being convinced that it is true: that the word 'sex' was formed at the same time as the thing itself. As a consequence, there must have been a time when the ancestor had no sex and yet was already endowed with a fairly well-developed language that has since passed down into contemporary speech during the long period of sexual formation.

That the ancestor might have spoken before the sex existed is a point so important that before continuing any further, we want to make certain that the conviction of this truth penetrates the mind of all attentive readers.

There is, according to our Infallible Law, a patent correlation between the words *neuf, noeud,* and *ne* [new, knot, not]. This sound has the same values as *n'ai* = *j'ai* [(I) don't have = I have]. *N'æu* [(?)] meant in the mind of the first being: 'I have,' 'here,' 'take.' *Neux* [(?)] = take. Since this idea has formed the number 'nine' [*neuf*], the word 'new' [*neuf*], the word 'knot' [*noeud*] attached to the verb 'to knot,' and the negation 'not' [*ne*], one must find the common origin for these.

The word 'knot' is noble in the knots of hymen, it has thus a mystic connection to marriage. It is a low, base, and popular term for the sex.

The verb *naître* [to be born] equals: *neuf* and *noeud être* [new/nine and knot to be]. In order to be born, one must *ne être* [not to be, not being] or *ne pas être* [not to be]. He who is, is born, cannot be born again, and can no longer not be. Birth took place by the acquisition of a new object, the knot.

Je noeud acquis, tu noeud acquis, il noeud acquit, nous noeud acquîmes, vous noeud acquîtes, ils noeud acquirent [I acquired knot, you acquired knot, he acquired knot, we acquired knot, you (pl.) acquired knot, they acquired knot] have become the definite past of *naître* [to be born]: *Je naquis, tu naquis, il naquis, nous naquîmes, vous naquîtes, il naquirent* [I was born, you were born, he was born, we were born, you (pl.) were born, they were born].

Jeu neuf est [new game it is] = the game is new. *Joeu, noeud est* [(?), knot is]. *Jeune est, je nais, genêts* [young is, I am born, brambles]. Often births occurred at the time of brambles, the moment when they are in bloom. *Y noeud est* [it knot is], he is born. *Y noeud est-ce?* [it knot is it?], they are born.

Jeune être ai, jeune est trait, je naîtrai. [Young being is, young is trait, I will be born]. The sex was the first being, a young being, and this being presented himself in the form of a trait. As soon as the trait appeared, it was known that one had to be born. The sex came out of this trait, it was an extract, ex-trait or pulled. *Tu neuf être as* [you new being have], you will be born.

Thus we hear our ancestors speak our own language, which they created unconsciously before being born. If our ancestors had not spoken before being born, before using for the first time, the verb to be born would have no simple tenses, for man cannot say of himself: I was born, I am born, or I will be born. That can only be said figuratively and it is an axiom of philosophy and an evangelical truth that what is spiritual or figurative was originally animal or material.

Every man said of himself: I am born. We are all born: but first there were beings who were not born, although they were living and endowed with speech. Those who were born were nobles, in virtue of the hind part, the noble parts. Today, man is the only noble, for only the man of good will, whom God has chosen, can furnish his true birth extract and tell of his origin long before the most ancient families, far earlier than kings, emperors, marine gods, and even before Uranus, the most ancient of gods.

In German, the verb 'to be born' is translated *geboren werden* = to become born. Our ancestors became born, *wurden geboren:* today, men are born, *sind geboren.*

Geboren = born and is related in German to *geborht* = pierced.

In French, to pierce and to be born were, in the beginning, the same act: to be born, one had to pierce.

The sex was formed at first, but it wasn't pierced. In order to pierce, it was necessary that the opening in the bladder, which in the frog is found in the anus, be closed. Because of this the sex was inflamed, an abscess caused a fever until, piercing the sex, water escaped by its new path, and one was born.

With birth, language developed considerably, and we can say that almost all the numerous popular words date from this era.

The verb ‘to be born’ in all languages shares the following characteristic: simple tenses are only employed figuratively, they are no longer materially exact. The man was/is born [*l'homme est né*], the elder man [*l'homme aîné*], before the first day: he is the beginning of God's creation (Rev. 3.14).

The cry *neux* [(?)] or knot thus meant ‘take’ during the development of the knot. With time, this order became hideous, and elicited the refusal to obey which is expressed in the negation ‘not.’ Knot wants [*noeud veu*]. ‘Not want!’ [‘*ne veux!*’] the nephews [*neveux*] or the weak used to say to the uncles, the strongest.

The sound ‘not’ or ‘knot’ is found as a negation in most languages, and in the word that expresses the name or noun. *Le noeuds ons* [the knot ones] = I have the knot, and take the knot. This order created the name that comes from the sex and caused the ‘not’ to be pronounced. Our ancestors only took a name once they were born. The child didn't receive a name until after his birth. The woman who says *nay* refuses the *name* of the man.

So it is that one sound, one word, gives birth to different minds, either in the same moment, or subsequently. What is attractive to one is repulsive to another. It happens sometimes that we reject with force and violence that which had once attracted us with the most charm and intensity.

The knot was thus the first new object, the first novelty: *noeud ouve* or *ouvre, eau t'ai* [knot (?) (he) opens or works, water (I) have you (sounds like *nouveauté,* novelty)]. Thus the sex passing water is a novelty. How many millions of years preceded this novelty can be calculated by the age of the earth, since the frog appeared at the very beginning of its formation, in the age of granite.

English	nine	new
German	neun	neue
Swedish	nio	nia
Italian	nove	nuove
Spanish	nueve	nuevo
Greek	énnéa	néos, néa, etc.

Figure 1

There is a relation between the ‘nine’ and ‘new,’ which can be found in all languages (see figure 1).

There is, therefore, a definite link and a common origin between the novelty which was the perfect formation of the sex, under the name of the knot, and the number nine. This phonetic affinity comes from the fact that at the same era the ninth tooth appeared in each jaw of the ancestor's mouth: for it is in the development of teeth that enumeration began. . . .

Thus we have clearly outlined the relationship and shared origin of the words knot, not, nine, and new, and simultaneously proven, with a stupefying abundance of materials, that speech existed before the development of the sex.

In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. All things emerged from it.

And now let us examine the language of our frog. . . .

Translated by Stephanie Lysyk and Stéfan Sinclair

Novalis

Novalis is the pen name of Friedrich von Hardenberg (1772–1801), a central member of the German romantic group associated with the journal Athenaeum. *Most of his works are of a fragmentary nature, few of them appearing in his lifetime; "Monologue" is a posthumous text of uncertain date. He was among those who found in Ernst Chladni's figures a key to writing. "Could letters originally have been* acoustic figures," *Novalis wonders. "Letters a priori?" He then indulges in a fantasy of the Chladni figures executed in multicolored powders. Boehme's doctrine of signatures (see "Cosmology," p. 343 above) formed an agreeable subtext for Novalis's geophysical interest in language as a precipitate of cosmic vibrations. As a mining engineer, furthermore, Novalis grounded his speculations—like Thoreau's analysis of the railway embankment at Walden Pond—in precise observation. The opening passage of Novalis's prose fantasia* Die Lehrlinge zu Sais *(The Novices of Sais) makes an instructive complement to "Monologue":*

> The paths of humans are manifold. Whoever follows and compares them finds wonderful figures appearing; figures that seem to belong to that great cipher glimpsed everywhere in wings and eggshells, clouds and snow, in crystals and rock formations, icy water, the inside and outside of mountains, in plants, animals and people, in cloudbursts, on scored and striated plates of glass or pitch, iron filings leaping to the magnet, in strange twists of fate. We divine in such things a key to the cipher, even the grammar itself, but the presentiment fails to attain a higher register, resisting an elevated form. It seems an alkahest has been poured over human senses. Only fleetingly do wishes appear and thoughts condense. The presentiment arises, but quickly subsides before the blank stare.
>
> From afar I heard it said: The incomprehensible follows incomprehension, which searches only for what it already has and never finds anything new. We don't understand language because language doesn't understand itself, nor does it want to; the true Sanskrit speaks in order to speak, because speech is its joy and its essence.

There's actually something weird about speaking and writing; true conversation is just a word game. It's an absurd mistake, really, that people think they talk about things. Nobody realizes the greatest peculiarity about language is that it is only concerned with itself. That's why it's such a wonderful fruitful secret,—that when somebody talks just to be talking, what's said is actually the most noble and original of truths. By the same token, those who would speak with exactitude find themselves propelled by the humor of language to utter absurdities and follies. And so it is that many serious people come to hate language. They notice its waywardness, but don't recognize that contemptible chatter is the most earnest aspect of language. If only people would understand that language and mathematical formulae are alike, in that they constitute their own autonomous worlds, sport with themselves, express nothing but themselves, and for that reason are so wonderfully expressive—for that reason they mirror the odd play of relations between things. Only in their freedom are they members of nature, and only in their freely expansive movement does the world-soul express itself, making them the delicate measure and template of things. And so it is with language—whoever senses its tempo, its measure, its musical spirit, whoever inwardly hears the delicate effects of its inner nature, and moves hand or tongue accordingly, will be a prophet; on the other hand, whoever writes such truths but lacks the feeling and ear for language will be tricked by language and mocked by men, as Cassandra was by the Trojans. Should I imagine I've clearly set down the office and essence of poetry here, I know at the same time that nobody can understand it, that all this talk is chatter, and this isn't how poetry happens. But what if I were driven to speak? and this drive to speak spoke the sign of the inspiration of language, the efficacy of language within me? and my will only wanted what I had to do? Could this, then, without my knowledge or belief, be poetry? and a secret of language be made knowable? and so I would be called a writer, for what is a writer but someone spirited by language?—

Translated by Jed Rasula

Michel Leiris

Leiris (1901–1994) represents an intersection of this anthology's concerns and figures. His father was a friend of Roussel, whose work fascinated Leiris in boyhood. As a young man he was initiated into the ranks of the Surrealists, and was especially close to Joan Miró and André Masson (see Barthes in "Transpositions," p. 240 above); but he left in 1929 along with Artaud, Queneau, and Bataille—with whom he collaborated on the journal Documents. *He accompanied Marcel Griaule ("Cosmology," Part Four) on an ethnographic expedition in Africa, resulting in* L'Afrique fantôme *(1933) and* La langue secrète des Dogon *(1948). In* Brisées *he wrote about John Dee's hieroglyphic monad, Raymond Roussel's "How I Wrote Certain of My Books," Mallarmé and Duchamp, among other topics. Leiris's writing is generically ambiguous but often preoccupied with questions of language and signification. "Glossary" (1925) inaugurates his private dictionary, consisting of* Glossaire: j'y serre mes gloses *["Glossary: my glosses' ossuary" or "I squeeze my glosses there"] (1939, reprinted in* Mots sans mémoire*), and* Langage tangage: ou ce que les mots me disent *(1985). A sample of Leiris's generally untranslatable glosses: SIGNE—il singe; OCÉAN—eaux et ans; RÉVOLUTION—solution de tout rêve?; LITTÉRATURE—art de lutte et de râles; ou bien raclure de littoral; SYNTAXE—saint axe; NAISSANCE—n'est sens, DÉMON—mon dé. Some words appear in each collection with a distinct definition, such as LANGAGE—bagage lent, langes de l'esprit (1939); (engage au jeu, par élan) (1985); and PARADISE (consonnes dures: P, R, D, comme "perdu"; voyelles froides: A, I, comme "haï") (1939); pure idée (ou parodie) (1985). Pondering Leiris's practice of word erasures (* biffures*), philosopher Emmanuel Levinas reflects that "thought is originally word-erasing—that is to say, symbolic. And because thought is symbolic, ideas can hook up with one another and create a connecting network . . . [which] owes its value not so much to the fact that it connects one thought to another but rather to the fact that it guarantees the presence of one given thought* within *another."*

A monstrous aberration causes people to believe that language came into being to facilitate their relations with one another. It is with this end in mind, of usefulness, that they make dictionaries in which words are catalogued and given a well-defined meaning (they believe), based on usage and etymology. Now, etymology is a perfectly ineffectual science that is not at all informative about the *true* meaning of a word, that is, the particular, personal signification that each individual ought to assign to it, as his mind pleases. As for usage, it is superfluous to say that that is the lowest criterion to which one could refer.

The everday meaning and the etymological meaning of a word can teach us nothing about ourselves, since they represent the collective part of language, which was made for all people and not for each of us individually.

By dissecting the words we like, without bothering about conforming either to their etymologies or to their accepted significations, we discover their most hidden qualities and the secret ramifications that are propagated through the whole language, channeled by associations of sounds, forms, and ideas. Then language changes into an oracle, and there we have a thread (however slender it may be) to guide us through the Babel of our minds.[1]

(1925)

Between its utilitarian floorboards and its religious rigging lofts, however befouled the stage may be, the world could never become so closed that there would not remain a little room for play. "Poetic archaisms," grimaces, blasphemies, logomachy, mirages, cabala: at man's height the mouth utters its cries, tosses forth its oracles, gives vent to its puns. To allow words to come to life, bare themselves, and show us by chance, for the space of a lightning bolt bony with dice, a few of our reasons for living and dying—such is the convention of the game. Midway between the too-soiled ground and the too-sublime vaults, at the level of the air, entering the skin of the role, poetry plays its game.

(1939)

Translated by Lydia Davis

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[1] First published in *La Révolution surréaliste* 1, no. 3 (1925), this note, preceded by a poetic interpretation of seventy-five French words, the first fragments of *Glossaire*, was followed by these lines from Antonin Artaud: "Yes, this is all that language is good for from now on, a means of going mad, eliminating thought, rupturing; a labyrinth of foolishnes, not a DICTIONARY into which certain pedants from the environs of the Seine may channel their spiritual narrowness." [Translator's note.]

Gerard Manley Hopkins

Hopkins stands out among English poets for his exceptional vocabulary, clearly indebted to etymological speculations like those presented here. The verbal sonority of his verse was of great concern to Hopkins, and he experimented ceaselessly with ways to indicate graphically what his poems were to sound like. In this process, the dimension of sound invested in the poem and destined for vocal release is paradoxically overcome by a thicket of diacritical cues that subordinate enunciation to visual design. This is not evident in most printings of the poetry, but is plainly on view in the facsimile volumes of Hopkins's manuscripts edited by Norman MacKenzie. Restoration of Hopkins's diacritical design, as in the following text of "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves," provokes comparison with the visual dimension of works in "Words in Freedom" (Part One) and "Sound Effects" (Part Two).

Diary Entries on Etymology

Horn.

The various lights under which a horn may be looked at have given rise to a vast number of words in language. It may be regarded as a projection, a climax, a badge of strength, power or vigour, a tapering body, a spiral, a wavy object, a bow, a vessel to hold withal or to drink from, a smooth hard material not brittle, stony, metallic or wooden, something sprouting up, something to thrust or push with, a sign of honour or pride, an instrument of music, etc. From the shape, *kernel* and *granum, grain, corn.* From the curve of a horn,[1] κορωνις, *corona, crown.* From the spiral *crinis,* meaning ringlets, locks. From its being the highest point comes our *crown* perhaps, in the sense of the top of the head, and the Greek κέρας, horn, and κάρα, head, were evidently identical; then for its sprouting up and growing, compare *keren, cornu,* κέρας, horn with grow, *cresco, grandis, gras,* great, *groot.* For its curving, *curvus* is probably from the root *horn* in one of its forms, κορωνη in Greek and *corvus, cornix* in Latin and *crow* (perhaps also *raven,* which may have been *craven* originally) in English bear a striking resemblance to *cornu, curvus.* So also γέρανος, *crane, heron, herne.* Why these birds should derive their names from *horn* I cannot presume to say. The tree *cornel,* Latin *cornus* is said to derive its name from the hard horn-like nature of its wood, and the *corns* of the foot perhaps for the same reason. *Corner* is so called from its shape, indeed the Latin is *cornu.* Possibly (though this is rather ingenious rather than likely, I think) *grin* may mean to curve up the ends of the mouth like horns. Mountains are called *horn* in Switzerland; now we know from Servius that *herna* meant *saxum* whence the Hernici, *Rock-men,* derive their name; *herna* is a horn-

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[1] κορωνισ is the name for the flourish at the end of a book, and also for the mark over a crasis, shaped thus ʼ.

like crag. ἔρνος, a shoot, is so called from its horn-like growth. Curiously enough the expression κεράων ἔρνος ocurs in Oppian, and another word, ερνυξ, in the *Poetics* of Aristotle. Or it is possible that ἔρνος may be so called from its shooting up as, not in the shape of, a horn. Expressions. He hath raised up a horn of salvation for us.

. . .

See *horn* above. On the other hand the derivation of *granum, grain* may be referred to the head.

Grind, gride, gird, grit, groat, grate, greet, κρούειν, *crush, crash,* κροτειν etc.

Original meaning to *strike, rub,* particularly *together.* That which is produced by such means is the *grit,* the *groats* or crumbs, like *fragmentum* from *frangere, bit* from *bite. Crumb, crumble* perhaps akin. To *greet,* to strike the hands together(?). *Greet,* grief, wearing, *tribulation. Grief* possibly connected. *Gruff,* with a sound as of two things rubbing together. I believe these words to be onomatopoetic. *Gr* common to them all representing a particular sound. In fact I think the onomatopoetic theory has not had a fair chance. Cf. *Crack, creak, croak, crake, graculus, crackle.* These must be onomatopoetic.

. . .

Crook, crank, kranke, crick, cranky. Original meaning crooked, not straight or right, wrong, awry. A crank in England is a piece of mechanism which turns a wheel or shaft at one end, at the other receiving a rectilinear force. Knife-grinders, velocipedes, steam-engines etc have them. *Crick* in the neck is when some muscle, tendon or something of that sort in the neck is twisted or goes wrong in some way.

Cranky, provincial, out of sorts, wrong. The original meaning being *crooked,* cf. *curvus* and for derivation see under *horn.*

. . .

Flick, fillip, flip, fleck, flake.

Flick means to touch or strike lightly as with the end of a whip, a finger etc. To *fleck* is the next tone above flick, still meaning to touch or strike lightly (and leave a mark of the touch or stroke) but in a broader less slight manner. Hence substantively a *fleck* is a piece of light, colour, substance etc. looking as though shaped or produced by such touches. *Flake* is a broad and decided *fleck,* a thin plate of something, the tone above it. Their connection is more clearly seen in the applications of the words to natural objects than in explanations. It would seem that *fillip* generally pronounced *flip* is a variation of *flick,* which however seems connected with *fly, flee, flit,* meaning to make fly off. Key to meaning of *flick, fleck* and *flake* is that of striking or cutting off the surface of a thing; in *flick* (as to flick off a fly) something little or light from the surface, while *flake* is a thin scale of surface. *Flay* is therefore connected, perhaps *flitch.*

. . .

Flag, (droop etc), *flaccere,* notion that of waving instead of rigidity, flowing (as we say of drapery). Hence *flag* the substantive. *Fledge* to furnish with wings with which compare *fly, fled* etc.

With *fillip, flip* cf. *flap, flob.*

Cf. the connection between *flag* and *flabby* with that between *flick* and *flip, flog* and *flap, flop.*

. . .

Skim, scum, squama, scale, keel, (i.e. skeel)—*squama* and *scale* being the topmost flake of what may be skimmed from surface of a thing.

. . .

Hollow, hull (of ships and plants), κοῖλος, *skull* (as κεφαλὴ and *caput* that which holds, contains), *hole, hold,* etc. *Hell.* I believe both *caelum* and *caena* or *cena* to be from κοῖλον and κοινέ.

. . .

Gulf, golf. If this game has its name from the holes into which the ball is put, they may be connected, both being from the root meaning hollow. *Gulp, gula, hollow, hold, hilt,* κοιλός, *caelare* (to make hollow, to make grooves in, to grave), *caelum,* which is therefore same as though it were what it once was supposed to be a translation of κοιλόν, *hole, hell,* ('The hollow hell') *skull, shell, hull* (of ships and beans).

. . .

skill, originally I believe to divide, discriminate. From same word or root *shell* (in a school), *shilling* (division of a pound), and they say *school* (both of boys and whales), *shoal, scale* (of fish), *keel,* etc. *Skill* is of course connected with *scindere* and other words meaning to cut, divide—σχίζειν etc.

Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves

Earnest, earthless, equal, attuneable, | vaulty, voluminous, . . . stupendous
Evening strains to be tíme's vást, | womb-of-all, home-of-all, hearse-of-all night.

Her fond yellow hornlight wound to the west, | her wild hollow hoarlight hung to the height
Waste; her earliest stars, earlstars, | stárs principal, overbend us,
Fíre-féaturing héaven. For éarth | her béing has unbóund; her dápple is at énd, as-
Tray or aswarm, all throughther, in throngs; | self ín self stéepèd and páshed—qúite
Disremembering, dísmémbering | áll now. Heart, you round me right
With: Óur évening is óver us; óur night | whélms, whélms, ánd will énd us.
Only the beakleaved boughs dragonish | damask the tool-smooth bleak light; black,
Ever so black on it. Óur tale, O óur oracle! | Lét life, wáned, ah lét life wind
Off hér once skéined stained véined variety | upon, áll on twó spools; párt, pen, páck
Now her áll in twó flocks, twó folds—bláck, white; | right, wrong; réckon but, réck but, mind
But thése two; wáre of a wórld where bút these | twó tell, éach off the óther; of a ráck
Where, selfwrung, selfstrung, sheathe- and shelterless, | thóughts against thoughts in groans grind.

Ernest Fenollosa (ed. Ezra Pound)

Fenollosa (1853–1908) was an American collector and curator of Asian art. His wife assembled Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art *(1912) from his posthumous manuscripts, then settled on American expatriate poet Ezra Pound as a suitable editor for her husband's other papers on poetry, poetics, and the Japanese Noh drama. For successive winters in 1913 and 1914, Pound shared Stone Cottage with William Butler Yeats, adapting Fenollosa's notes into publishable poems and plays while the Irish poet responded with a leaner idiom and Noh-inspired verse plays of his own. Pound's versions of Chinese poems—filtered through Fenollosa who had them secondhand from Japanese scholars—were acclaimed on the publication of* Cathay *in 1915 (T. S. Eliot later called Pound "the inventor of Chinese poetry for our time"). "The Chinese Written Character" confirmed Pound's own theories of imagism and vorticism, but he could not get the essay published until 1919 when it was serialized in* The Little Review. *It appeared the next year in Pound's own book* Instigations *and has since been reissued several times as a pamphlet. Fenollosa erroneously supposes a purely graphic process at work in the formation of the ideogram; but as Jacques Derrida points out, "this irreducibly graphic poetics was, with that of Mallarmé, the first break in the most entrenched Western tradition" of phonocentrism.*

From *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*

My subject is poetry, not language, yet the roots of poetry are in language. In the study of a language so alien in form to ours as is Chinese in its written character, it is necessary to inquire how these universal elements of form which constitute poetics can derive appropriate nutriment.

In what sense can verse, written in terms of visible hieroglyphics, be reckoned true poetry? It might seem that poetry, which like music is a *time art,* weaving its unities out of successive impressions of sound, could with difficulty assimilate a verbal medium consisting largely of semi-pictorial appeals to the eye.

Contrast, for example, Gray's line:

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day

with the Chinese line:

月	耀	如	晴	雪
Moon	*Rays*	*Like*	*Pure*	*Snow*

Unless the sound of the latter be given, what have they in common? It is not enough to adduce that each contains a certain body of prosaic meaning; for the question is, how can the Chinese line imply, *as form,* the very element that distinguishes poetry from prose?

On second glance, it is seen that the Chinese words, though visible, occur in just as necessary an order as the phonetic symbols of Gray. All that poetic form requires is a regular and flexible sequence, as plastic as thought itself. The characters may be seen and read, silently by the eye, one after the other:

Moon rays like pure snow.

Perhaps we do not always sufficiently consider that thought is successive, not through some accident or weakness of our subjective operations but because the operations of nature are successive. The transferences of force from agent to object, which constitute natural phenomena, occupy time. Therefore, a reproduction of them in imagination requires the same temporal order.[1]

Suppose that we look out of a window and watch a man. Suddenly he turns his head and actively fixes his attention upon something. We look ourselves and see that his vision has been focused upon a horse. We saw, first, the man before he acted; second, while he acted; third, the object toward which his action was directed. In speech we split up the rapid continuity of this action and of its picture into its three essential parts or joints in the right order, and say:

Man sees horse.

It is clear that these three joints, or words, are only three phonetic symbols, which stand for the three terms of a natural process. But we could quite as easily denote these three stages of our thought by symbols equally arbitrary, *which had no basis in sound;* for example, by three Chinese characters:

人	見	馬
Man	*Sees*	*Horse*

If we all knew *what division* of this mental horse-picture each of these signs stood for, we could communicate continuous thought to one another as easily by drawing them as by speaking words. We habitually employ the visible language of gesture in much this same manner.

But Chinese notation is something much more than arbitrary symbols. It is based upon a vivid shorthand picture of the operations of nature. In the algebraic figure and in the spoken word there is no natural connection between thing and sign: all depends upon sheer convention. But the Chinese method follows natural suggestion. First stands the man on his two legs. Second, his eye moves through space: a bold figure represented by running legs under an eye, a modified picture of an eye, a modified picture of running legs, but unforgettable once you have seen it. Third stands the horse on his four legs.

The thought-picture is not only called up by these signs as well as by words, but far more vividly and concretely. Legs belong to all three characters: they are *alive.* The group holds something of the quality of a continuous moving picture.

The untruth of a painting or a photograph is that, in spite of its concreteness, it drops the element of natural succession.

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[1] [Style, that is to say, limpidity, as opposed to rhetoric. E.P.]

Contrast the Laocoön statue with Browning's lines:

'I sprang to the stirrup, and Joris, and he

. . . . . .

And into the midnight we galloped abreast.'

One superiority of verbal poetry as an art rests in its getting back to the fundamental reality of *time.* Chinese poetry has the unique advantage of combining both elements. It speaks at once with the vividness of painting, and with the mobility of sounds. It is, in some sense, more objective than either, more dramatic. In reading Chinese we do not seem to be juggling mental counters, but to be watching *things* work out their own fate.

Leaving for a moment the form of the sentence, let us look more closely at this quality of vividness in the structure of detached Chinese words. The earlier forms of these characters were pictorial, and their hold upon the imagination is little shaken, even in later conventional modifications. It is not so well known, perhaps, that the great number of these ideographic roots carry in them a *verbal idea of action.* It might be thought that a picture is naturally the picture of a *thing,* and that therefore the root ideas of Chinese are what grammar calls nouns.

But examination shows that a large number of the primitive Chinese characters, even the so-called radicals, are shorthand pictures of actions or processes.

For example, the ideograph meaning 'to speak' is a mouth with two words and a flame coming out of it. The sign meaning 'to grow up with difficulty' is grass with a twisted root. But this concrete *verb* quality, both in nature and in the Chinese signs, becomes far more striking and poetic when we pass from such simple, original pictures to compounds. In this process of compounding, two things added together do not produce a third thing but suggest some fundamental relation between them. For example, the ideograph for a 'messmate' is a man and a fire.

A true noun, an isolated thing, does not exist in nature. Things are only the terminal points, or rather the meeting points, of actions, cross-sections cut through actions, snapshots. Neither can a pure verb, an abstract motion, be possible in nature. The eye sees noun and verb as one: things in motion, motion in things, and so the Chinese conception tends to represent them.

The sun underlying the bursting forth of plants = spring.

The sun sign tangled in the branches of the tree sign = east.

'Rice-field' plus 'struggle' = male.

'Boat' plus 'water' = boat-water, a ripple.

Let us return to the form of the sentence and see what power it adds to the verbal units from which it builds. I wonder how many people have asked themselves why the sentence form exists at all, why it seems so universally necessary *in all languages?* Why *must* all possess it, and what is the normal type of it? If it be so universal, it ought to correspond to some primary law of nature.

I fancy the professional grammarians have given but a lame response to this inquiry. Their definitions fall into two types: one, that a sentence expresses a 'complete thought'; the other, that in it we bring about a union of subject and predicate.

The former has the advantage of trying for some natural objective standard, since it is evident that a thought can not be the test of its own completeness. But in nature there is *no* completeness. On the one hand, practical completeness may be expressed by a mere interjection, as 'Hi! there!', or 'Scat!', or even by shaking one's fist. No sentence is needed to make one's meaning more clear. On the other hand, no full sentence really completes a thought. The man who sees and the horse which is seen will not stand still. The man was planning a ride before he looked. The horse kicked when the man tried to catch him. The truth is that acts are successive, even continuous; one causes or passes into another. And though we may string ever so many clauses into a single compound sentence, motion leaks everywhere, like electricity from an exposed wire. All processes in nature are interrelated; and thus there could be no complete sentence (according to this definition) save one which it would take all time to pronounce.

In the second definition of the sentence, as 'uniting a subject and a predicate,' the grammarian falls back on pure subjectivity. *We* do it all; it is a little private juggling between our right and left hands. The subject is that about which *I* am going to talk; the predicate is that which *I* am going to say about it. The sentence according to this definition is not an attribute of nature but an accident of man as a conversational animal.

If it were really so, then there could be no possible test of the truth of a sentence. Falsehood would be as specious as verity. Speech would carry no conviction.

Of course this view of the grammarians springs from the discredited, or rather the useless, logic of the Middle Ages. According to this logic, thought deals with abstractions, concepts drawn out of things by a sifting process. These logicians never inquired how the 'qualities' which they pulled out of things came to be there. The truth of all their little checker-board juggling depended upon the natural order by which these powers or properties or qualities were folded in concrete things, yet they despised the 'thing' as a mere 'particular,' or pawn. It was as if Botany should reason from the leaf-patterns woven into our table-cloths. Valid scientific thought consists in following as closely as may be the actual and entangled lines of forces as they pulse through things. Thought deals with no bloodless concepts but watches *things move* under its microscope.

The sentence form was forced upon primitive men by nature itself. It was not we who made it; it was a reflection of the temporal order in causation. All truth has to be expressed in sentences because all truth is the *transference of power.* The type of sentence in nature is a flash of lightning. It passes between two terms, a cloud and the earth. No unit of natural process can be less than this. All natural processes are, in their units, as much as this. Light, heat, gravity, chemical affinity, human will, have this in common, that they redistribute force. Their unit of process can be represented as:

term	*transference*	*term*
from	*of*	*to*
which	*force*	*which*

If we regard this transference as the conscious or unconscious act of an agent we can translate the diagram into:

agent *act* *object*

In this the act is the very substance of the fact denoted. The agent and the object are only limiting terms.

It seems to me that the normal and typical sentence in English as well as in Chinese expresses just this unit of natural process. It consists of three necessary words: the first denoting the agent or subject from which the act starts, the second embodying the very stroke of the act, the third pointing to the object, the receiver of the impact. Thus:

Farmer *pounds* *rice*

The form of the Chinese transitive sentence, and of the English (omitting particles), exactly corresponds to this universal form of action in nature. This brings language close to *things,* and in its strong reliance upon verbs it erects all speech into a kind of dramatic poetry.

A different sentence order is frequent in inflected languages like Latin, German or Japanese. This is because they are inflected, i.e. they have little tags and word-endings, or labels, to show which is the agent, the object, etc. In uninflected languages, like English and Chinese, there is nothing but the order of the words to distinguish their functions. And this order would be no sufficient indication, were it not the *natural order*—that is, the order of cause and effect.

. . .

In nature there are no negations, no possible transfers of negative force. The presence of negative sentences in language would seem to corroborate the logicians' view that assertion is an arbitrary subjective act. *We* can assert a negation, though nature can not. But here again science comes to our aid against the logician: all apparently negative or disruptive movements bring into play other positive forces. It requires great effort to annihilate. Therefore we should suspect that, if we could follow back the history of all negative particles, we should find that they also are sprung from transitive verbs. It is too late to demonstrate such derivations in the Aryan languages, the clue has been lost; but in Chinese we can still watch positive verbal conceptions passing over into so-called negatives. Thus in Chinese the sign meaning 'to be lost in the forest' relates to a state of non-existence. English 'not' = the Sanskrit *na,* which may come from the root *na,* to be lost, to perish.

Lastly comes the infinitive which substitutes for a specific colored verb the universal copula 'is,' followed by a noun or an adjective. We do not say a tree 'greens itself,' but 'the tree is green'; not that monkeys 'bring forth live young,' but that 'the monkey is a mammal.' This is an ultimate weakness of language. It has come from generalising all intransitive words into one. As 'live,' 'see,' 'walk,' 'breathe,' are generalised into states by dropping their objects, so these weak verbs are in turn reduced to the abstractest state of all, namely bare existence.

There is in reality no such verb as a pure copula, no such original conception: our very word *exist* means 'to stand forth,' to show oneself by a definite act. 'Is' comes from the Aryan root *as,* to breathe. 'Be' is from *bhu,* to grow.

In Chinese the chief verb for 'is' not only means actively 'to have,' but shows by its derivation that it expresses something even more concrete, namely 'to snatch from the moon with the hand.' 有

Here the baldest symbol of prosaic analysis is transformed by magic into a splendid flash of concrete poetry.

. . .

One is led to suspect from an analysis of the Aryan languages that such differences are not natural, and that they have been unfortunately invented by grammarians to confuse the simple poetic outlook on life. All nations have written their strongest and most vivid literature before they invented a grammar. Moreover, all Aryan etymology points back to roots which are the equivalents of simple Sanskrit verbs, such as we find tabulated at the back of our Skeat. Nature herself has no grammar. Fancy picking up a man and telling him that he is a noun, a dead thing rather than a bundle of functions! A 'part of speech' is only *what it does.* Frequently our lines of cleavage fail, one part of speech acts for another.

They *act for* one another because they were originally one and the same.

Few of us realise that in our own language these very differences once grew up in living articulation; that they still retain life. It is only when the difficulty of placing some odd term arises, or when we are forced to translate into some very different language, that we attain for a moment the inner heat of thought, a heat which melts down the parts of speech to recast them at will.

One of the most interesting facts about the Chinese language is that in it we can see, not only the forms of sentences, but literally the parts of speech growing up, budding forth one from another. Like nature, the Chinese words are alive and plastic, because *thing* and *action* are not formally separated. The Chinese language naturally knows no grammar. It is only lately that foreigners, European and Japanese, have begun to torture this vital speech by forcing it to fit the bed of their definitions. We import into our reading of Chinese all the weakness of our own formalisms. This is especially sad in poetry, because the one necessity, even in our own poetry, is to keep words as flexible as possible, as full of the sap of nature.

Let us go further with our example. In English we call 'to shine' a *verb in the infinitive*, because it gives the abstract meaning of the verb without conditions. If we want a corresponding adjective we take a different word, 'bright.' If we need a noun we say 'luminosity,' which is abstract, being derived from an adjective. To get a tolerably concrete noun, we have to leave behind the verb and adjective roots, and light upon a thing arbitrarily cut off from its power of action, say 'the sun' or 'the moon.' Of course there is nothing in nature so cut off, and therefore this nounising is itself an abstraction. Even if we did have a common word underlying at once the verb 'shine,' the adjective 'bright' and the noun 'sun,' we should probably call it an 'infinitive of the infinitive.' According to our ideas, it should be something extremely abstract, too intangible for use.[2]

The Chinese have one word, *ming* or *mei*. Its ideograph is the sign of the sun together with the sign of the moon. It serves as verb, noun, adjective. Thus you write literally, 'the sun and moon of the cup' for 'the cup's brightness.' Placed as a verb, you write 'the cup sun-and-moons,' actually 'cup sun-and-moon,' or in a weakened thought, 'is like sun,' i.e. shines. 'Sun-and-moon cup' is naturally a bright cup. There is no possible confusion of the real meaning, though a stupid scholar may spend a week trying to decide what 'part of speech' he should use in translating a very simple and direct thought from Chinese to English.

The fact is that almost every written Chinese word is properly just such an underlying word, and yet it is *not* abstract. It is not exclusive of parts of speech, but comprehensive; not something which is neither a noun, verb, nor adjective, but something which is all of them at once and at all times. Usage may incline the full meaning now a little more to one side, now to another, according to the point of view, but through all cases the poet is free to deal with it richly and concretely, as does nature.

In the derivation of nouns from verbs, the Chinese language is forestalled by the Aryan. Almost all the Sanskrit roots, which seem to underlie European languages, are primitive verbs, which express characteristic actions of visible nature. The verb must be the primary fact of nature, since motion and change are all that we can recognise in her. In the primitive transitive sentence, such as 'Farmer pounds rice,' the agent and the object are nouns only in so far as they limit a unit of action. 'Farmer' and 'rice' are mere hard terms which define the extremes of the pounding.

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[2] [A good writer would use 'shine' (i.e. to shine), 'shining' and 'the shine' or 'sheen', possibly thinking of the German *'schöne'* and *'Schönheit'*; but this does not invalidate Professor Fenollosa's contention. E.P.]

. . .

The whole delicate substance of speech is built upon substrata of metaphor. Abstract terms, pressed by etymology, reveal their ancient roots still embedded in direct action. But the primitive metaphors do not spring from arbitrary *subjective* processes. They are possible only because they follow objective lines of relations in nature herself. Relations are more real and more important than the things which they relate. The forces which produce the branch-angles of an oak lay potent in the acorn. Similar lines of resistance, half-curbing the outpressing vitalities, govern the branching of rivers and of nations. Thus a nerve, a wire, a roadway, and a clearinghouse are only varying channels which communication forces for itself. This is more than analogy, it is identity of structure. Nature furnishes her own clues. Had the world not been full of homologies, sympathies, and identities, thought would have been starved and language chained to the obvious. There would have been no bridge whereby to cross from the minor truth of the seen to the major truth of the unseen. Not more than a few hundred roots out of our large vocabularies could have dealt directly with physical processes. These we can fairly well identify in primitive Sanskrit. They are, almost without exception, vivid verbs. The wealth of European speech grew, following slowly the intricate maze of nature's suggestions and affinities. Metaphor was piled upon metaphor in quasi-geological strata.

Metaphor, the revealer of nature, is the very substance of poetry. The known interprets the obscure, the universe is alive with myth. The beauty and freedom of the observed world furnish a model, and life is pregnant with art. It is a mistake to suppose, with some philosophers of aesthetics, that art and poetry aim to deal with the general and the abstract. This misconception has been foisted upon us by mediaeval logic. Art and poetry deal with the concrete of nature, not with rows of separate 'particulars,' for such rows do not exist. Poetry is finer than prose because it gives us more concrete truth in the same compass of words. Metaphor, its chief device, is at once the substance of nature and of language. Poetry only does consciously what the primitive races did unconsciously. The chief work of literary men in dealing with language, and of poets especially, lies in feeling back along the ancient lines of advance. He must do this so that he may keep his words enriched by all their subtle undertones of meaning. The original metaphors stand as a kind of luminous background, giving color and vitality, forcing them closer to the concreteness of natural processes. Shakespeare everywhere teems with examples. For these reasons poetry was the earliest of the world arts; poetry, language and the care of myth grew up together.

I have alleged all this because it enables me to show clearly why I believe that the Chinese written language has not only absorbed the poetic substance of nature and built with it a second work of metaphor, but has, through its very pictorial visibility, been able to retain its original creative poetry with far more vigor and vividness than any phonetic tongue. Let us first see how near it is to the heart of nature in its metaphors. We can watch it passing from the seen to the unseen, as we saw it passing from verb to pronoun. It retains the primitive sap, it is not cut and dried like a walking-stick. We have been told that these people are cold, practical, mechanical, literal, and without a trace of imaginative genius. That is nonsense.

Our ancestors built the accumulations of metaphor into structures of language and into systems of thought. Languages today are thin and cold because we think less and less into them. We are forced, for the sake of quickness and sharpness, to file down each word to its narrowest edge of meaning. Nature would seem to have become less like a paradise and more and more like a factory. We are content to accept the vulgar misuse of the moment.

A late stage of decay is arrested and embalmed in the dictionary.

Only scholars and poets feel painfully back along the thread of our etymologies and piece together our diction, as best they may, from forgotten fragments. This anaemia of modern speech is only too well encouraged by the feeble cohesive force of our phonetic symbols. There is little or nothing in a phonetic word to exhibit the embryonic stages of its growth. It does not bear its metaphor on its face. We forget that personality once meant, not the soul, but the soul's mask. This is the sort of thing one can not possibly forget in using the Chinese symbols.

In this Chinese shows its advantage. Its etymology is constantly visible. It retains the creative impulse and process, visible and at work. After thousands of years the lines of metaphoric advance are still shown, and in many cases actually retained in the meaning. Thus a word, instead of growing gradually poorer and poorer as with us, becomes richer and still more rich from age to age, almost consciously luminous. Its uses in national philosophy and history, in biography and in poetry, throw about it a nimbus of meanings. These centre about the graphic symbol. The memory can hold them and use them. The very soil of Chinese life seems entangled in the roots of its speech. The manifold illustrations which crowd its annals of personal experience, the lines of tendency which converge upon a tragic climax, moral character as the very core of the principle—all these are flashed at once on the mind as reinforcing values with accumulation of meaning which a phonetic language can hardly hope to attain. Their ideographs are like blood-stained battle-flags to an old campaigner. With us, the poet is the only one for whom the accumulated treasures of the race-words are real and active. Poetic language is always vibrant with fold on fold of overtones and with natural affinities, but in Chinese the visibility of the metaphor tends to raise this quality to its intensest power.

I have mentioned the tyranny of mediaeval logic. According to this European logic thought is a kind of brickyard. It is baked into little hard units or concepts. These are piled in rows according to size and then labeled with words for future use. This use consists in picking out a few bricks, each by its convenient label, and sticking them together into a sort of wall called a sentence by the use either of white mortar for the positive copula 'is,' or of black mortar for the negative copula 'is not.' In this way we produce such admirable propositions as 'A ring-tailed baboon is not a constitutional assembly.'

Let us consider a row of cherry trees. From each of these in turn we proceed to take an 'abstract,' as the phrase is, a certain common lump of qualities which we may express together by the name cherry or cherry-ness. Next we place in a second table several such characteristic concepts: cherry, rose, sunset, iron-rust, flamingo. From these we abstract some further common quality, dilutation or mediocrity, and label it 'red' or 'redness.' It is evident that this process of abstraction may be carried on indefinitely and with all sorts of material. We may go on for ever building pyramids of attenuated concept until we reach the apex 'being.'

But we have done enough to illustrate the characteristic process. At the base of the pyramid lie *things*, but stunned, as it were. They can never know themselves for things until they pass up and down among the layers of the pyramids.

. . .

The sheer loss and weakness of this method are apparent and flagrant. Even in its own sphere it can not think half of what it wants to think. It has no way of bringing together any two concepts which do not happen to stand one under the other and in the same pyramid.

It is impossible to represent change in this system or any kind of growth.

This is probably why the conception of evolution came so late in Europe. *It could not make way until it was prepared to destroy the inveterate logic of classification.*

Far worse than this, such logic can not deal with any kind of interaction or with any multiplicity of function. According to it, the function of my muscles is as isolated from the function of my nerves, as from an earthquake in the moon. For it the poor neglected things at the bases of the pyramids are only so many particulars or pawns.

Science fought till she got at the things.

All her work has been done from the base of the pyramids, not from the apex. She has discovered how functions cohere in things. She expresses her results in grouped sentences which embody no nouns or adjectives but verbs of special character. The true formula for thought is: The cherry tree is all that it does. Its correlated verbs compose it. At bottom these verbs are transitive. Such verbs may be almost infinite in number.

In diction and in grammatical form science is utterly opposed to logic. Primitive men who created language agreed with science and not with logic. Logic has abused the language which they left to her mercy.

Poetry agrees with science and not with logic.

The moment we use the copula, the moment we express subjective inclusions, poetry evaporates. The more concretely and vividly we express the interactions of things the better the poetry. We need in poetry thousands of active words, each doing its utmost to show forth the motive and vital forces. We can not exhibit the wealth of nature by mere summation, by the piling of sentences. Poetic thought works by suggestion, crowding maximum meaning into the single phrase pregnant, charged, and luminous from within.

In Chinese character each word accumulated this sort of energy in itself.

. . .

If we attempt to follow it in English we must use words highly charged, words whose vital suggestion shall interplay as nature interplays. Sentences must be like the mingling of the fringes of feathered banners, or as the colors of many flowers blended into the single sheen of a meadow.

The poet can never see too much or feel too much. His metaphors are only ways of getting rid of the dead white plaster of the copula. He resolves its indifference into a thousand tints of verb. His figures flood things with jets of various light, like the sudden up-blaze of fountains. The prehistoric poets who created language discovered the whole harmonious framework of nature, they sang out her processes in their hymns. And this diffused poetry which they created, Shakespeare has condensed into a more tangible substance. Thus in all poetry a word is like a sun, with its corona and chromosphere; words crowd upon words, and enwrap each other in their luminous envelopes until sentences become clear, continuous light-bands.

Now we are in condition to appreciate the full splendor of certain lines of Chinese verse. Poetry surpasses prose especially in that the poet selects for juxtaposition those words whose overtones blend into a delicate and lucid harmony. All arts follow the same law; refined harmony lies in the delicate balance of overtones. In music the whole possibility and theory of harmony are based on the overtones. In this sense poetry seems a more difficult art.

From *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*

How shall we determine the metaphorical overtones of neighbouring words? We can avoid flagrant breaches like mixed metaphor. We can find the concord or harmonising at its intenset, as in Romeo's speech over the dead Juliet.

Here also the Chinese ideography has its advantage, in even a simple line; for example, 'The sun rises in the east.'

The overtones vibrate against the eye. The wealth of composition in characters makes possible a choice of words in which a single dominant overtone colors every plane of meaning. That is perhaps the most conspicuous quality of Chinese poetry. Let us examine our line.

日	昇		東
Sun	*Rises*	*(in the)*	*East*

The sun, the shining, on one side, on the other the sign of the east, which is the sun entangled in the branches of a tree. And in the middle sign, the verb 'rise,' we have further homology; the sun is above the horizon, but beyond that the single upright line is like the growing trunk-line of the tree sign. This is but a beginning, but it points a way to the method, and to the method of intelligent reading.

Eng. Welsh. and Roman.	Greek.	Greek names.
a, ɑ.	α.	Alpha, the call upon parts.
b.	β, б.	Beta, upon the beasts of the fields.
c, k, q.	κ.	Kappa, the action upon parts.
d, dd.	δ.	Delta, the division or race of things.
e, ε, h, з.	ε, η, з, н.	Epsilon and Heta, the clitoris, erectors, and all the interjectory generative springs.
f, ff.	φ.	Phi, the penis in action and generative qualities.
g.	γ, ʃ.	Gamma, the testicles, or an action about the mother.
i, j.	ι.	Iota, the rays of the sun upon things.
l, ll.	λ.	Lamda, things extended or place.
m.	μ.	Mv, man's body, and things about as surrounding man.
n, ng.	ν.	Nv, in man, or betwixt his thighs, human will and the negatives.
o.	ο, ω, Ω.	Omicron and Omega, the little and great circle of space, place and motion.
p.	π, Ψ, ψ	Pe and Psi, the penis not in action, and animal and other dead parts.
r.	ϱ, ρ.	Rho, the eccho or sound of animals, &c.
s, ʃ, z.	σ, z, ζ.	Zigma and Zeta, sounds in general.
t, T, th.	τ, Θ.	Tau and Theta, man's possessions, properties, extension, &c.
ν, u, ᴜ, w.	υ, Υ.	Upsilon, the upper springs, as man's face, &c.
χ, ch, wh.	Ξ, ξ, χ.	Chi or xi, animal, gutteral, and sounds of superior actions.

This alphabet consists of seven vowels or voices, which in their own nature, actively, and without any superaddition, yield compleat articulate sounds, particles, or names, and hieroglyfically represent the elementary or active parts of the human body, and nature, as similar thereto, namely, a, e or h, i, o, u, w or ω, Y; and of other characters or letters, which are called consonants from their yielding articulate sounds only in company with vowels. Of these b, c, d, f, g, l, m, p, t, are also hieroglyfic representations of the various parts of the human body and other things as similar thereto; and they are mutable and inflectory in the pronominal cases, from the less animate, slow, and almost silent radical state, both as to the sense and sound, to the rougher, louder, and more animate and active sounds and things; as for instance, c, p, τ, the most silent, as expressive of material or passive substances or local inanimate actions inflect into g, b, d, which are somewhat louder and rougher, as being expressive of the higher and more active things and actions of men and animals; and those again into the still louder and rougher sounds of ch, ff, th, as those are expressive of the most energic actions or modes of motion; but when g, b, d, are the radicals of inflection, they again inflect into ng, f, m, dd, n, and in some dialects the l and r have the aspirates ll and rh for the radicals, as has been shewn in my former treatises. To the loss of these inflections may in a great measure be imputed the great variety and confusion of languages; new dialects having been formed by changing the radicals and misapplying the inflectories, as father for pater, brother for frater, and mother for mater. b, c, d, j, k, p, q, t, as yielding little or no sounds, without the assistance of vowels, are called mutes; l, m, n, r, f, s, as having imperfect obscure sounds without the company of vowels, have been distinguished as semivowels; and l, m, n, r, also as liquids from their flowing in particles, as in, îf, îl, îm, în, îr, the flow of the sun's rays, light, motion, liquid, and life or qualities upon the lower world of beings and things; but the distinctions of mutes and semivowels seem trifling, as most letters seem to be vowels in some degree.

Here, before we proceed to explain the figures and powers of letters, it may not perhaps be improper to observe that the parts, affections, and ideas of the human pair, incorporated, as in the figures at the end of this essay, were the archetypes or patterns of the original characters, whose figures and sounds are descriptive of the universe; that letters and particles have two sounds, the masculine and feminine, the active and passive, or the short and long; that a particle or syllable cannot in the genuine sense of language consist of more than two letters; and that there are not in fact any such things as dipthongs; those now supposed to be such, being two or three particles of one vowel each, which formerly was a common method of composition, as appears by the following piece of ancient poetry; in which there is no consonant made use of, the r being only a letter of sound.

Oer iu yr eira ar yr yri,
Oi riu or awyr i rewi;
Oer iu yr ia oi riu ri
Ar eira oer iu yr yri.

Thus Englished.

From its high hill cold is ice,
Cold is the snow on Snowden;
Its nature from the sky to freeze
On snow so cold is Snowden.

The letter o is an indefinite circle, signifying the universe, motion, space, the sun's figure and motion, and all or ol, extension of length, breadth, and thickness; and it is expressible of parts only by a diminution of its general sense; as in b-ol, a ball or part of all, or-b, a circle part, w-or-l-d, a man's circle part or place of life, b-or-d-er the circle part of the possessions and 10, one circle, which being repeated comprehends all numbers. This, like all other original letters, has two sounds, the long and the short, as in *on, one, ton, tone;* and its shape or figure was taken from the circumference of the human pair close together, face to face, which is man's chief circle place, signified by the term *world.* The

Greek ω is a double υ as has been explained in my former treatise.

The letter i is an indefinite line, representing man in his primitive state of innocence, as it does still his body, as a line, without its extension, and his head and senses by its dot; and in a secondary sense are expressed by this line and dot, length or heighth towards the sun, the sun-beams, fire, heat, and other qualities both spiritual and animal, as still flowing upon man, and other things as relative to him, and originally perhaps centering in himself, and since his fall only relatively. But though man and nature have been impaired by original sin, they still seem to be invested with certain springs, energies, or returns of those ilations and qualities, as, thinking, willing, voice articulate, powers generative and growth; whereby the human species may be extended, and acquire so much knowledge and virtue, as, with the blessing of Providence, to be capable of being reinstated. The chief of which springs is expressed by the letter u, a compound of two i's signifying man's compound of male and female, and spirit and matter, with a c at their bottom, springing them upwards; by y as to the generative and vegetative parts, which also is expressive of woods and other growth; it being a compound of i j, and half of the spring c, as not being expressive of the spirit of man. The i also expresses man as an upright line placed in the centre of all worldly beings and substances, to whom they bear a relation, as shall be shewn under adverbs. The u vowel seems to derive its figure from the human face, the seat of the voice, and the heart, and the feminine or consonant v from the vagina, if it be an original letter, but, from its sound, it seems to supply the place of the digamma. The y or Y resembles trees, plants and vegetables, and the j consonant is the half of it, and sometimes made use of instead of g, to express some of the generative parts and qualities. These vowels have each two sounds, the high and low, long and short, or grave and acute, viz. i, as in, *in, high,* or *i,* go thou; the u vowel, as in, *unction, united;* and the y as the u in unction and y in hyssop; but the w has only one long sound, as in *woman, womb, wood,* and it is mostly applicable to spirituals, man, and things belonging to him; the wh has the gutteral sound of the Welsh ch, or the Greek χ, as in *where, why;* the j consonant has the sound of g in *generation;* and the v consonant that of the soft flowing f of the Welsh, or as in *verb, vice;* thus supplying the softer sound and meaning of the digamma.

The letters a, e, h, ε, η, H, in their primary sense signify the male and female posteriors, the clitoris, erectores, &c. the impulse and springs of generation, and the earth and water place of man; whence a came to be an expression for the element earth or matter and things hard, rough, or interjectory, and ε for the element of water and any feminine, soft, or passive parts or things, but the interjectory aspirate e or *he* is masculine, and the ε has one spring resembling that of rain. The a has properly two sounds, as in *animal, have,* or *name,* but not that of o or the northern a in *all;* the masculine e or he has an aspirate sound, as in *hero,* and a mute one, as in *echo;* and the feminine ε was originally sounded soft, like the French cedill ç, as in *fleece, vice,* and the use of this character and sound ought to be continued or the soft c should be marked with a cedill to prevent the confusion of the hard and soft sounds of c; but more of this elsewhere.

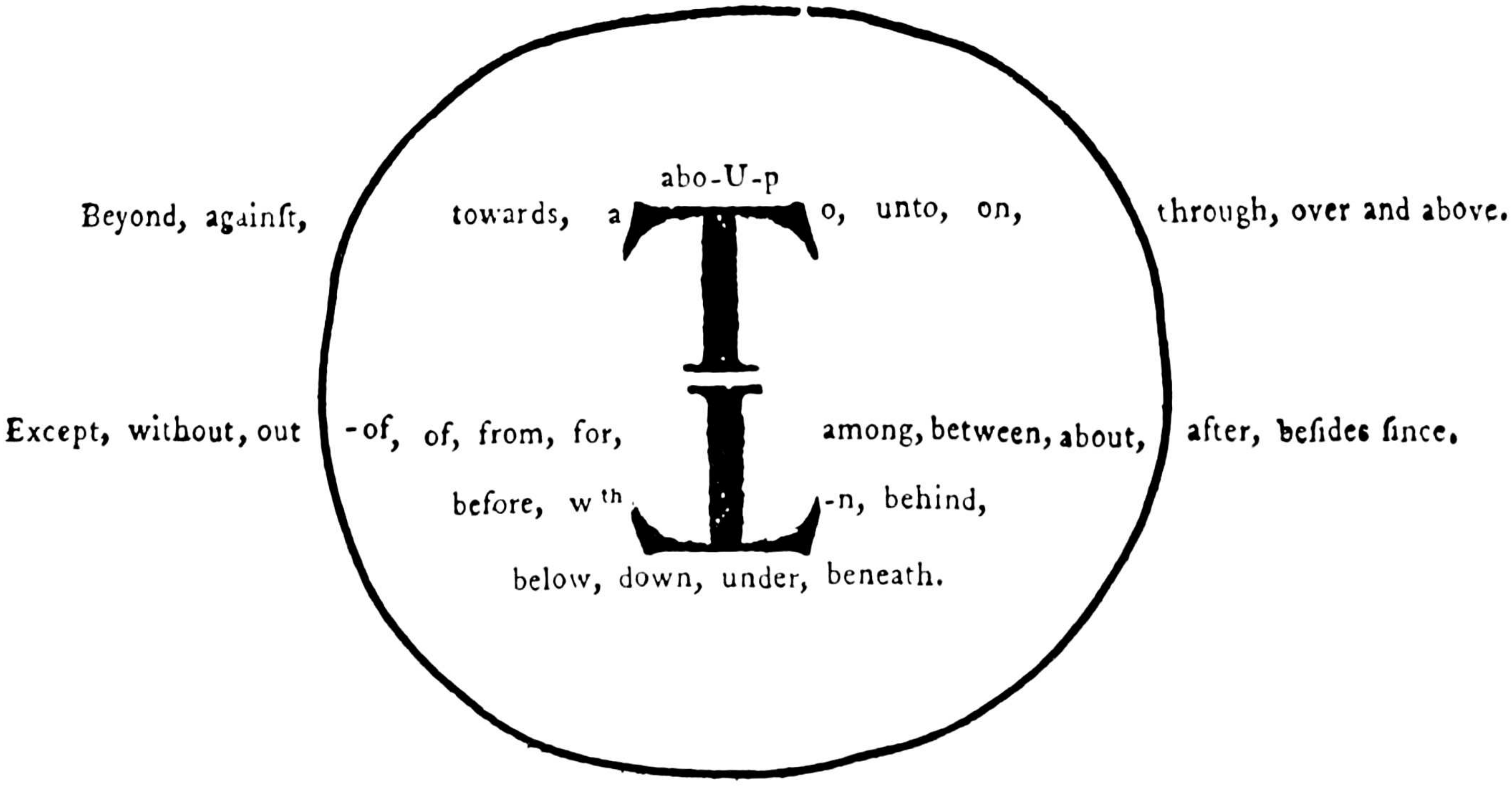
The letters c, k, q, g, γ, wh, ch, κ, χ, Ξ, ξ, signify actions of different sorts and degrees, viz. c as the half of o, signifying motion, and k and q, as significant of its sound, signify the modes of common local motions or actions; and the hard c also represents half the round of the posteriors, as o doth the whole of the male and female together, as the feminine or soft c doth the other half; g or γ represent the testicles or half the gamma, f being the other half, and the generative and growing parts of man and nature; and the rest are their gutteral inflections expressive of animal sounds and actions. The palatals should be sounded hard and short, as in *quick,* the soft c in some cases as the feminine ε before explained, and s before the vowel i, the superlative gutteral sorts, as the wh in *where, why,* and the Welsh *chwa, chwant,* and g or γ as in *egg, edge.* All these characters are nothing more than compounds or c, h, s, as will be shewn hereafter.

The letters d and b put together, thus, db, as compounds of i and o, or length and breadth, are expressive of man and woman's body part, from the thigh to the part of the body which the elbow reaches, and all other living beings so extended, as τ does the extension of matter, but being again divided into d and b, they express living things, or the qualities of parts and diminutives of bodies, and emblematically spirits and privatives, as p does parts of matter, as divisor of τ. The d and b ought to be sounded alike in all languages, as, *de, be,* and dd, as *the,* but letters are farther explained in the former treatise.

T represents man's legs together, with the feet upwards, and both toes turned outwards as upright and traverse lines, extension and man in his temporal state, turned out of paradise, under the sky, topsy turvy, and all things as relative to him, and the line upon which time or the manner of reckoning the distances of actions are measured. T sounds alike in all languages, and th and Θ as in *the, Thebes,* and those are the inflections of T.

The letters p. ph. ff, f, π, φ, ψ, signify material or dead parts, or their qualities, as p divides T; ph is p high, up, or active; the digamma Φ or f, the p inflecting the gamma; and ψ actions of a lesser nature, as growth. The p and π sound alike in all languages, ph, ff, as Φυω, *fusec,* or *fun,* ψ as in *Psalms,* it being only a compound of p, and f as the v consonant in *verb,* but these letters are farther explained in the former treatise.

m represents a man's body and arms or wings from the top of b and d, or the elbow part of the body, up to the neck, and the world, forms, and things, as sur-



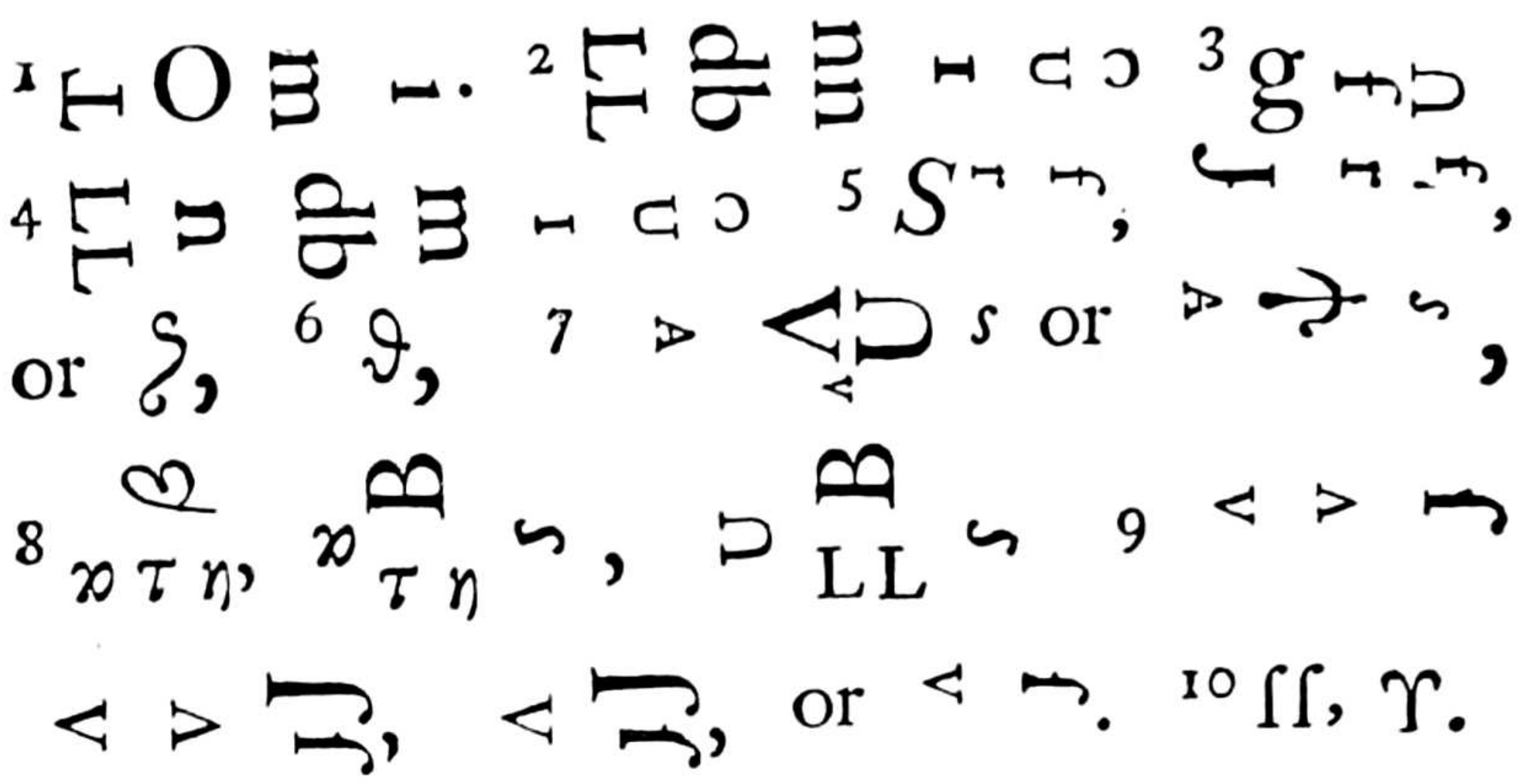
rounding and belonging to man, as shall be further explained amongst the particles. It sounds the same in all languages. *n* is the thighs, with the parts above them, forming a traverse line, and the vacancy betwixt the same when extended, signifying to be in, or in existence or possession, having f and d for its auxiliaries, but before the vowels or springs it expresses a negative or privative; and it has no particular sound.

IL, L, λ, are T or man's legs, once put together, separated, and as divisors of T, which signifies space or extension, are expressive of particular lengths and breadths, and their places, qualities, &c. The L or λ is sounded as eel or îl and IL has an aspirate hissing sound in the Welsh, Spanish, and some other dialects.

The letters r, ɚ, ρ, P, R, represent animals and their parts, and their mouths as the place of sound; S being added to P, as a sound, forms R, the sound as well as part of an animal; and they are all to be sounded as in *viper,* except where they happen to be radical letters, and then with an aspirate h as in *rhyme.* The S, σ, Z, are also letters of sound, but express no part of man, and are rather the shape of some animal of the serpentine kind, the waving of the breath or water, &c. They have two sounds, the hard and soft, as in *loss, zone.* . . .

. . .

Some sketches of the creation, the original and present state of men and animals in our system of beings, the fall of man and other obscure scenes of antiquity, have been drawn from the sacred characters made use of by the Priests and Druids to preserve their original, ancient and secret knowledge, in order to illustrate the present subject, and setting the present confused, deluded, or enchanted state of language and knowledge in a right course and direction. But the press not admitting of their being exhibited in that order and mode, which seemed to be necessary for a compleat transmission of the sacred hieroglyfics, the following specimen must suffice for the present.



1. The State of man previous to the formation of Eve and his essential modes. 2. His compound state or the nonessential modes and division into parts and actions. 3. Emblems of concupiscible appetites, innate parental traces, energies and passions acquired by the fall. 4. The state of man and woman after the fall, as enchanted and confined to place or matter. 5. The Serpent, an emblem of speech. 6. A theta instead of the Coptic kei, an emblem of man's primitive state, &c. 7. Birds; but the round u is made use for the Coptic c. 8. Beasts and Bulls. 9. Fishes. 10. Twigs and trees. But more of this hereafter.

And as all letters are thus deriveable from the parts of man, resembling all other things, Adam might be very well instructed in their use in paradise—And the divisions of time appear to have been made from the days of the creation. See the former treatise.

O'er plants celestial, that fell below,
And grass of serf which now together grow,
With her sword flaming round the living stem,
Guarding its fruit upon the side of Shem,
Expatiate free! 'tis the scene of man,

A mighty maze! beyond my present plan;
'A wild where weeds and flowers promiscuous shoot;
'Or garden, tempting with forbidden fruit.
'Together let us beat this ample field;
'Try what the open, what the covert yield.'
Here to dispel prolific nature's charm,
Prudence forbids; tho' far from real harm;
And science shuns the sympathetic touch;
So here we finish, lest we *feel* too much.
Withall affirming of the birth of tongue.
If *Hiero*'s right, others must be wrong.

Many of the ancient philosophers, particularly the Druids and Pythagoreans, owned the supreme Deity, whom they not only called a Monad, but also a Tetrad. In the Golden Verses, and other places, he is called the fountain of the eternal nature, the maker of all things, and the intelligent God, which they endeavoured to account for from certain mysteries in the number 4; but some among the moderns conjecture, that this mystery was nothing more than the Tetragrammaton, or four-lettered name Jehovah, or Jove, which the Jews never pronounced. They also had a notion of a triad or trinity by divine tradition. They likewise had some apprehensions of an evil principle informing matter, which they called a dæmon, a diad, or duality; and that numbers being the principles of all things, the world was produced by the Monad and Diad, the two sources of numbers, from whence proceeded points; from points, lines; from lines, plane figures; from planes, solids; and from solids, sensible bodies, whose elements were fire, water, earth, and air; that the world began by fire and the fifth element; that there being five mathematical or regular bodies or figures, the earth was made of the cube; fire of the pyramid, or tetrahedron; the air of the octahedron; water of the icosahedron; and the sphere of the universe of the dodecahedron; but to this it has been objected, that numbers could produce nothing but numbers. That things were reducible to 10 sorts, classes, societies or fraternities, and had a kind of speech, figure, and colour; that names were originally the images of things, imposed by the father of mankind from whom all human wisdom flowed; and as our ideas were the true resemblances of things, so were our words of our notions. That the active principle of all things was fire, and the passive water, whereof the world was framed. That God is an intelligible circle, whose center is every where, and circumference no where; that in framing the universe he had an eye on the eternal exemplar, or idea pre-existing in the divine mind, representing all things; that the universe was thence supposed to be a living intelligible creature formed after this exemplar; that the soul of man in particular was a self-moving number, a divine ray, or an emanation from God, as light from the fun; and that virtue came not from right reason but revelation. That all sensible forms were the imitations of intelligible things; that all created images were the symbols of God; and that the universe is God expanded, and the creation the rays of the deity. On the withdrawing of which, all the external world and things disappear and return to God; and the civ. Psalm says, that God sendeth forth his spirit and they are created; and he reneweth the face of the earth; he hideth his face and they are troubled; he taketh away the breath, they die, and return to their dust.

These opinions explained by the divine patterns, primordial archetypes, and the figures and forms of letters corresponding therewith, and with all regular bodies.

These mysterious, and hitherto inexplicable traditions of the ancients being explained, will appear to have their foundation in truth, and to be in a great measure supported by holy writ. For true it is, that the four lettered name Jehovah, Jove, or the five vowels, by the division of o into a e, and transposed EUoi, the *spring* of io, comprehends the symbols of 1. A dark point, or intelligent omega, from whence all things flow. 2. Its fluxion, or ilation in a line or diad. 3. Its expansion, or motion, into an infinite circle or system of divine ideas, decrees, or triads. 4. Its farther spring or energy, forming a tetrad, quaternion, or an io of the solar system. 5. Its seperation or breaking off into matter, which became the fifth element of fluid and solid matter, or earth and water, or air, whose symbols so separated are ⱭЭ or an Æ dipthong implied by the Э, divided by d, brought again into being upon the transverse line of life b, inclosed and covered by cb, forming a new io, circle or system of our heaven and earth; again divided into places and corporeal parts by L and p, and extended by T or ⊥; which, being divided, forms a double ⅃L reversed; but again farther combined in the second or divided line n into the more corporeal and palpable bodies, compounded forms, and superficies m. after the divine exemplars, as appears by the map. The linear fluxion of the points represent intellectuals and light; but where by their sympathetic powers, they are become more compact lines, they flow in matter, of which m is the symbol, as consisting of three lines, or triads, which by the like emotions are become connected sideways, and entangled so as to cease almost all emanation and motion. But being again separated into parts, and the same emotion of re-union continuing, things seem to have retained a sort of sympathetic power or attraction; as doth their separation into still smaller and irregular parts deprive them of this sympathy, and put them in a contrary state of direction, antipathy, repulsion, and gravitation. But the emanative powers have been restored at the creation, in the way of vegetation, animation, and volition, the energic triads of the mundane io.

The Mundane Systems, with their symbols, thence investigated, and farther remarks on the primordial patterns.

Hence we conceive the decree, or pattern of creation, to be an expansion of a point from the center, by 2 strait lines across, into an infinite circle, like a tellus; that the sun and fixed stars have been produced, and receive their energies from the point along one of these lines; and that our earth and other primary planets of the solar system, were produced by an uniform projectile motion in a strait line from the sun; having on the fourth day, by the force of gravitation or attraction, or rather the sun's central motion, acquired a circular motion round the sun as the centre, with their moons, or satellites, likewise moving round them as their centers. From the three elementary principles, light, motion, and fluid and solid matter of the earth and waters, together with the energic power u sprung up 3 other systems or circles, namely, the vegetable, animal, and human; of which the first, as being tied by its root to receive its generation and nutrition from the earth, is represented by the symbol Y; the second being freed and separated from the earth, and having its powers of generation and nutrition, as well as respiration and volition within itself, is denoted by U; and the third, having besides those powers, the superaddition of another spring of intelligence or volition, hath w for its symbol. These three systems have their imitations in the air, earth, and water; as, the strait and crooked bill and aquatic birds, the simple, compound, and adventitious metals, minerals, and other fossils, and the cetaceous, cartilaginous, and spinous fishes, whose names they analogically assume; all else being mere informal parts thereof, which impart their qualities to the other systems, as those do to each other. So that there seems to be an universal mutual dependence, connection, and harmony betwixt all created beings. The c, f, g, ch, q, x, r, s, z, are no primary symbols, but f and g signify the semen and its fluxion in generation, flying, &c. ch, q, and x, are auxiliaries to c and g, and r, s, z, are mere signs or letters of material, animal, and other sounds. And as to the number ten, the io of numbers, it will produce by its multiplication or division, no parts as other numbers, nor any thing but tens, or whole circles, or one and all of numbers, which anciently were the round characters. Thus the mundane creation seems to be the division of the elements according to the eternal patterns, ideas, or decrees, subsisting in the divine mind; with which letters seem to correspond, as the symbols represent and express all ideas and things both of sense and inspiration, notwithstanding Mr. Locke's assertion to the contrary, for want of a competent notion of the divine origin of human speech; and thus also the first io seems to be a triad of an intelligent point, its ilation in lines, and extension in an infinite circle or modes; the second io to be the solar quaternion, or a triad of light, motion, and form; and the third io to be our globe, or a triad of motion, matter, and form; of which 3 ios or systems man seems to be a compound as a vegetable, animal and intelligent being, and his form comprehends all regular parts, letters, and symbols of ideas thence derived.

The same farther considered with scripture.

Whether the scripture Genesis was conceived from those symbols, as they had been revealed to Adam, or by their republication to Moses, seems to be not very material, as it substantially corresponds with the io triads, or 9 Genuses, of created beings. For God's making heaven and earth in the beginning, previous to the solar system, agrees with our first io triad, with the quaternion of the solar system; and Moses' fix daies or divisions thereof, with the stars also, exactly correspond with our symbols. And, although the same may have been conceived from the symbols as several progressive actions, and the sun and earth might not have acquired a regular circular motion, or the sun appear in its full lustre, on account of the grossness of the air, till the fourth day, nor the dry land and vegetation before the third; yet the whole of the solar system, and probably those of the fixed stars, must have been instantly on the divine fiat or word, brought into being on the first day or division of creation. This emanation of the Deity, as unfolded by the sacred symbols, receives some confirmation from our Saviour's dying words on the cross, in the sacred language, for iloi, iloi, lama, sabachtani, literally express God's ilation standing still from spreading upon beings. And many other passages of holy writ might be here subjoined of the like purport, but the scriptures being here in every one's hand, and better explained by the church, our readers for their farther satisfaction are referred thereto.

The same considered with the microcosmic archetypes.

The wonderful phænomenon, the human microcosm, seems to comprehend all the symbols or figures, forms, and qualities of nature, and also to partake of the celestial; for his legs correspond with ⅃L, the division of T or ⊥; his thighs with the transvèrse line at top, with n; the joint buttocks of the human pair, with ᗡЭ, their earth and water parts; which are again divided into death and life by db, forming a new io of man, in the way of propagation on their fall; and connected with the human mortal body, or trunk m, as is m with another io of life, the head and neck, as he is literally represented standing in the garden of Eden in the annexed map.

The great world and the microcosm, with their symbols, compared, whereby their analogy appears.

On comparing the great world with the human, we find a near analogy, or agreement betwixt their parts, properties, and qualities; as their respective parts of earth and water, with two lights for their direction; their respective gardens of Eden, with four rivers running from reservoirs therein, the seas in their present state being the adventitious effects of the deluge; the world is round like the buttocks of the human pair joined together; they both generate, degenerate, and regenerate; they have mouths or ports, bodies or continents, grass or hair, veins, fibres, and coverings, or skins, sounds and smells, and various other analogical properties, which, without farther demonstration, evince a sameness in the original figures and forms of things, and that the names of one system may; and do serve for those of another, agreeable to the nature of things. Hence our analysis of the circles of Gomer was confined to the primary archetypes of the divisions and distinctions of earth and water, according to the signification of the Agrafic characters. Nor is there indeed any thing under heaven but the imitations of the primordial patterns, or divine decrees; even the soul of man seems to be an energic unit of divine vision, or will, *the spring of light,* with its various operations of comparing, judging, and assenting to things as they resemble the divine patterns, as the sensitive soul doth with respect to the objects of sensation.

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The origin of the symbols of the mundane systems and elements farther explained by the vowels.

Having taken a general view of the symbols, with their archetypes, we now proceed in their investigation, as they particularly relate to the various systems of this world. And in the first place observe, that the symbols i o u e, which primarily respect the divine patterns of the intellectual system; and secondly, the sun, with its ilation and energy flowing into matter; thirdly, assume the form of i-o-u-e-*a,* the sun's circle or system springing to matter, or earth and water, as i represents the sun, with its emanation; o, the sphere and the circles, or systems of things and circular motions; Y, the spring of vegetables; u, the animal; w, the animal and rational, or human; Є, fluids, as air and water; and *a,* the earth or solid, matter; u and Y, representing the spring of i, with its fluxion downwards, in the generation of animals and vegetables, with their generation upwards. Hence ic expresses the first motion; or ic-er-at, motion flowing from the point of i to the surface of the water or creating; as does its derivative and inflectory ig, the like emanative motion in the generation of animals and vegetables, or ig-in-er-at and be-ig-in; and uc and ug, the return, emotions, and springing up of those emanations, as in genu. In like manner il is expressive of the emanation of light from the dot or sun, as is ul of the return of light by the eye, lu-gaid or oc-ul-us; and so as to all other particles, as appears by the following investigation thereof.

The parts and species thereof defined by consonants joined with vowels or particles.

Thus the vowels as complete voices and signs, denote the elements and Genusses of things; of which consonants being only their combinations, determine their meaning to particulars, and in conjunction with the vowels, form particles, or the symbols of parts and species. Hence b and its inflection f, or ib, if, bi, fi, are expressive of the being, life, and food of particulars, as in bib, biferous, big, bile, bill, bird, birth, blade, field, fig, fire, fit, and various other specimens thereof given in our former publications. p signifies the parts of a, as having the line downwards, and fixed in matter or a, and also high parts; as in the particles ip, or pi, and the word hip or the thigh joint downwards, represented by p, pickle, pier, pierce, pike, pin, pine, pipe, piss, or the issue of p, or penis, which p also represents, pit, or the side of p, & c.—d denotes the division of intelligent light and creation of i or io, and an affirmation and a negative by the internal sight that it is, or is not seen, as in the particles id, di, dis, and the words idea; identity, idiot, idol, hide, diabolical, die, dim, dip, disable, divide, divine, dark, dead, done, &c.—c being the half of o, a semicircle, or an hemisphere, signifies any inclosed parts and actions in o, the sphere, and circle of motion and things in a general sense; ch is its auxiliary as to local motion, and g as to that of generation, as in the particles ic, ich, ig, ci, chi, gi, signifying the different actions or emanations of i, within the circle o, and their contraries, or shuts and inclosed parts, and in the words ice, or the flowings of i, inclosed or congealed, h-ic-up, itch, igneous, j-ig, ich or h-ight, ci or first, chief, give, &c.—T or ⊥, signifies the extension of i and things in general sideways, and Th, is its auxiliary, as in the particles it, itch, or the side action, ti, ty, thy, and the words it-em, it-inerant, h-ith-er, ti-ara, or tire, proper-ty, thine, thin, thicker, &c.—L as a part of ⊥, signifies an high place, leng-th, or the long side and bread-th, or the broad side; and as i extended, light in general, as in the particles il, li, or light, and its ilation, and the words ilation, illumine, h-ill, light, like, line, link, &c.—n consists of two lines, expressing existences and non-existences, and their affirmation; as in, ni, or in, and not in the line of life, the budding of a vegetable, or the birth of an animal, and the words in-side, inbred, in-crease, in-form, nid, night, nill, nim, &c.—m consisting of three lines, denotes surfaces, forms, and palpable bodies, parts and existences, as surrounding the line i or man, in imensity, as in the particles im, mi, an im-ens, or man, and in the words, immense, immortal, imagination, imbody, or i in a body, impartial, mi, or my-self, mystery, mid, middle, mix, &c.—S when added to i, is an affirmation by sound, speech, and the sight of things as such, as d is as to the internal sight, and r is a letter of mere sound, and adds material and animal, or substantive sounds to vowels, without expressly affirming; and thus the consonants appear with the vowel i to denote the being or life of things, 2nd existences in general.

As to the sense of the consonants, with ᴜ and w, or the springs and energies, or the returns of the ilations of i in vegetation, animation, and volition, and other actions and things analogical thereto. And first, of p, b, f, which with ᴜ make up, ub, uf, pu, bu, fu; and signify the springing up of inanimate and animate parts, fluxions, and motions, and their several sorts and species, as in, up, ub-erty, h-uff, p-uff, purge, pus, push, bubble, bud, buck, bull, buffalo, bug, bum, bump, bunter, bush, fugitive, full, fumble, fume, fun, funnel, fur, fury, fuse, in-fuse, fuss, &c.—U c, uch, ug, cu, chu, gu, signify inclosing and feminine springs and energic parts, actions, and motions, animate and inanimate corresponding with the masculine and virile p and b, and erecting, building, and inclosing parts and things by analogy with the former, as in h-uck-ster, buck, s-c, d-uck, uc-sor, ch-uck, uch-al, the uppermost, or the inclosing sky, h-ug, b-ug, r-ug, ug-ly, cu—the inclosing spring of b or f, cu-pid, cu-b, cu-r, cu-rb, curl, cu-r-rent, cu-r-se, cu-t, chu-b, chu-ckle, chu-m, chu-rch, chu-rn, gu-st, gu-t, gu-ilt, gu-n, gush, &c.—Ul, lu, or lw, signify the springs of the rays of light and intelligence upon man and things, and their returns in the human race, ideas, colours, and other the like energies, as in ul-cer, d-ull, fwl or fool, r-ul-e, so-ul, wll or will, p-ull, b-ull, f-ull, lu-cid, lu or familu, or ly, lu-llaby, lu-ngs, lu-st, lu-sty, lu-ck, lu-xu-ry, &c—Um or wm, mu signify the springs and returns of i in the surrounding world, or life both animate and inanimate, and their negatives or privatives; as in wmb or womb, wman or woman, d-um-b, h-um-an, mu-r-der, mu-te, mummy, &c.—Un, nu signify in spring, or its negative, as in unto, or a spring into, un, one or universal, unity, until, nu or new, null, numb, numskull, nun, &c.—Ut, uth, tu, thu, signify an extension of the animate and inanimate springs, as in, uterus, utility, utmost, yo-uth, tr-uth, thu or thou, tutor, tug, thus, &c.—Ur, ru signify the animal spring and man, and their qualities and springs, as urtu or virtue, wrth or worth, wrd or word, wrship or worship, ru-ff, ru-ler, ru-min-ate, ru-n, ru-sh, runt, rut, ruthless, &c.—Us, su, or sw, signify mankind, animals, and vegetables, according to their sensations and qualities, as us, use, usage, subtle, sullen, sour, sweet, swift, &c.

Op, ob, of, po, bo, fo, signify the circle of living and dead parts of things, the boundary parts, an inclosed part or body, and a flight or moving from, as open, oppose, opposite, oblation, oblivion, obscure, off, of-fence, off-end, po-ach, pod, poke, pollute, portion, post, pot, body, bomb, fee, foil, foreign, be-fore, forsake, &c.—Oc, och, og, co, cho, go, signify the most ocult and distant actions and motions, and inclosed or shut up parts or things, and coalescences, as, occult, occur, oculist, och or oh, ogle, coach, coagulate, coast, cobweb, cod, county, choke, chord, go, goblin, God, gore, government, &c.—Od, ot, do, to, signify the several divisions or things, sides, and mizmaze, comprehended within a circle or system, together with their motions and actions, and covering, inclosing and bordering parts, as, hod, hodge-podge, odd, ode, other, ottoman, or the border man, do, to, &c.—Ol, lo, signify an extended circle, comprehending all, or one circle or system, an inclosed or round place, and to roll, &c.—Om, mo, signify the circle of earth and water, modes, forms, bulky bodies, and motions in general, &c.—On, no, signify to be in action or motion, and the contrary.—Or, ro, a circle, an orb, border, and a round, roomy, and a broad thing.—Os, so, the circle or extent, seen or sounded, and affirming by the same.

Ap, ep, ab, eb, af, ef, pa, pe, ba, be, fa, fe, signify the animate and inanimate parts of earth and water, in vegetation, animation, and other similar things and their qualities, properties, and privatives, as in, ap and ab, or parted from the earth or mother, part, pater, father, farm, barn, babe, bara or bread, fa or be-ans, pasture, famine, fast, barren, bad, fagot, beer, ebb, fertility, ferocity, petrify, peach, pear, &c.—Ac, ec, ach, ech, ag, eg, ca, ce, cha, che, ga, ge, express the parts inclosing, or as shuts to those of p, &c. or cooperating therewith in the motions of generation and other things, properties, and motions, as in action, echo, ecstacy, ache, achive, age, cabbage, egg, egistment, cart, carry, cell, keep, chaos, chest, check, garden, gain, generation, germins, get, &c.—Ad, ed, at, et, da, de, ta, te, and their inflections are expressive of the division and extension of earth and water into parts, sides, surfaces, coasts, countries, &c. with their qualities and privatives, as in addition, edition, edge, atlas, atom, atop, coat, et or and, etch, ethic, etymon, dad, dam, damp, darn, dead, deal, debt, deck, decline, decrease, defend, defect, table, tail, tallage, tare, tarras, task, tax, team, tear, ted, teem, tension, tent, texture, &c.—Al, el, la, le, are expressive of the several places of earth and water, and their parts and divisions, as in altitude, alps, altar, h-ell, elegy, elysian, elsewhere, land, large, lap, latitude, lay, lease, leave, lee, leet, let, length, heel, lewd, &c.—Am, em, ma, me, are expressive of the existences of earth and water, or bodies surrounding us, or inclosing other things with their earthly and privative state, as I am or man existing in a body or in earth, ambient, ambit, ambulation, among, ample, emaciate, emanation, embalm, embay, embryo, emerge, emit, empty, mary, mater or mother, material, maze, measure, medium, mere, melt, men, metal, metre, &c.—An, en, na, ne, express mere existences in earth and water, and their privatives, affirmations, and negatives, as in an or a in, and or a in division, animal, annals, annual, ant, antique, enact, enclose, end or e-n-d, water in division, enjoy, enlarge, enter, na, or not, nail or not seen, nap or no part, narrow, nay, neap, need, negative, neither, ness, nest, never, &c.—Ar, er, ra, re, denote earth and water, and their parts and situations, with the flux of water, &c. as in ar, or the earth, arable, area, arise, arm, erase, eruption, wat-er, rabble, race, rabbet, rake, ramble, range, rarefy, rase, rebound, recede, recover, recur, reflux, refuge, rent, repast, rest, return, &c.—As, fa, es, fe, are earth and water as seen, founded, and situated, and their masculine and feminine parts with respect to their being upper or under, high or low, small or great, and other parts of earth and water, and the state of rest, as in ascend, ash or the low, ashes or the lowest, ashore or the lower ground, aside, askaunt, askew, aslant, astray, astride, asunder, escape, eschar, espouse, essence, esteem, sabbath, sad, saint, same, sand, sap, satan, or in the coast below, say, sea, seal, seat, second, secret, seduce, seed, semi, or the sea or female, division, serpent, she, set, &c.

Clinamen

At a key moment in De rerum natura *Lucretius draws the analogy between atoms and letters. In Book One he explains: "basic bodies take a certain structure, / And have defined positions, and exchange / Their blows in certain ways. The same bodies, / With only a slight change in their structure, / Are capable of forming wood or fire. / Like letters in the words for these same things, / Ignes and lignum: with slight transpositions, / They can be nominated 'flames,' or 'beams' [or, in another translation, 'fires' and 'firs']. Atoms then are to bodies what letters are to words: heterogeneous, deviant, and combinatory.*

The cause of these minor transpositions Lucretius ascribes to the atomic law of the clinamen (called parenklisis *by Epicurus in his* Letter to Herodotus*). The clinamen refers to the minimal swerve of an atom in laminar flow. In contrast to Democritus's earlier deterministic model of an invariant vertical fall, Lucretius's theory installs the random declination of the atoms as its basic law. As he explains in Book Two, the descending atoms suddenly and randomly swerve, and without this clinamen nature would never have created anything. Atomic collision then is both inevitable and unpredictable, occurring in "a time smaller than the minimum of thinkable time," and "differ[ing] from nothingness by the smallest possible margin." As the being-of-movement, the clinamen becomes apparent to itself only in the disappearance of stabilities. Like a slip of the tongue, the clinamen is less a performance than a happening.*[1]

The implications of Lucretius's analogy precipitate a major rethinking of the stability of the verbal sign. Conceived as atoms, letters are events strictly defined by their dynamics, and being perpetually volatile they introduce deviance as the basic rule of all grammata. *Julia Kristeva (who has elaborated a need for "semanalyse" as the analysis of microparticles of linguistic fallout) describes such graphic manifestations as "assemblages of signifying, phonic, and scriptural atoms, flying from word to word, creating in this way unsuspected and unconscious connections among the elements of discourse." The unpredictable swerve of the letter from the syntactic and grammatical flow not only invalidates the notion of a fixed, "inert" meaning but also fulfills, in the domain of language, that philosophic desire of Novalis for a systemlessness within all systems.*[2]

Lucretius commemorates sequentiation and dispersion—"a sum, but not a whole" according to Gilles Deleuze. "Nature is not attributive, but rather conjunctive: it expresses itself through 'and,' and not through 'is'. . . . Nature, to be precise, is power. In the name of this power things exist one by one, without any possibility of their being gathered together all at once." It is a question of particulate drift leading to moebian complexities, which Jean-François Lyotard insists are "not a matter of separation, but on the contrary, of movement, of displaceability on the spot." Daniel Defoe consolidates this at the *alphabetic level as proof of divine providence, "so the capital sounds of 24 Letters are capable of innumerable reflux [solely] by Divine Inspiration."*

The Lucretian equation has an important historical modification in Giordano Bruno's claim that atoms are to bodies what strokes and dots are to letters. Bruno effectively reduces the minimal vector of the clinamen from a swerve in primary articulation (i.e., a deviation and difference among letters) to a gestural declination of the prelettristic mark. Bruno's graphic atom organizes semantic states by a simple, sublettristic stroke that would, for instance, transform the letter I *into the letter* T. *A comparable minimum, the rotation of a dot around the letter in Francis Lodwick's* New Writing *(in "Transpositions," p. 220 above), serves to indicate verb tense, but the impracticality of this elegant solution is in the detail. A period marking the end of a sentence is visible in part because it affirms what the syntax provides; but a similarly minuscule indicator circulating around letters is harder to see to the degree that it must signify exclusively on its own. The particularities in Lodwick's system verge on the microscopic.*

Before the advent of the microscope it was not easily imagined that the constitutive particles of things were so animated. Is it possible to entertain a link between the development of microscopic awareness and the frenzy of etymological speculation that, in the wake of the demise of universal language schemes, became a predominant feature of linguistics in the nineteenth century? Where the word had been conceived as the minimal thinkable unit, words now gave way to animation in a lettristic micropedic prodigality, and the atomistic panorama of etymology eventually impinged on poetry. Paul Valéry, confronting Mallarmé's Coup de dés, *saw the words as "atoms of time that serve as the germs of infinite consequences lasting through psychological centuries." The spaciousness evoked here is a reminder that, in Epicurean cosmology, the contextual prerequisite of atoms is a void. We might say by analogy that void is to atoms what space and* différance *are to letters. Mallarmé's spacing in* Un coup de dés *solicits—as integral to the experience and the eventual dice-throw of the poem—the backing of that void (the ground of emergent figures) through which the lettristic swerves disseminate.*

In twentieth-century vanguard poetry, Russian zaum *or "beyonsense" is an extension of the principle of clinamen, dislodging the crust of social sediment to uncover fossil poetry in the rudiments, like Thoreau's return to the furnace of creation on the railway sand bank thawing in* Walden, *or Pound's vision (by way of Fenollosa) of Chinese hieroglyphs as primal signatures. Corollary is Jean Cocteau's claim that a literary masterpiece is no more than the alphabet in disorder. The Futurist poet Kruchenykh's practice of "shiftology" extends the clinamen to his native Russian, a language rich in affixes and polysyllabic words. Vladimir Markov provides as example the phrase "*gromy lo*mayut" (thunders break), where the italicized phonemes combine in the word* mylo *or "soap."*[3] *Such lettristic dislocations and recombinations are also integral to the Kabbalistic practice of* Temurah, *and Lucretius himself writes of hooked atomic structures. As we discuss in the preface to "Cosmology" (p. 328), Kabbalah is the tradition most emphatic in preserving the ancient linkage of cosmological speculation with a theory of language, and it is not surprising to find one of the most influential of modern critical rhapsodists*

(Harold Bloom) deriving an interpretive system from a gnostic kabbalism that reserves a place for the Epicurean law of the atom.

The ancient art of rhetoric tacitly envisioned language as an inertia from which words need to be nudged, jolted out of their accustomed signifying plummet, inducing a salutary perturbation. That the clinamen falls into the general category of tropes is obvious. Bloom calls the trope "a willing error, a turn from literal meaning in which a word or phrase is used in an improper sense wandering from its rightful place." A trope is a turn (taking a turn, entering the dance); tropology is atomic swervature; and the clinamen specifically is "an initial error because nothing can be in its proper place." It is just such a minute interpolation that provoked a riot in Paris in 1895, inspiring W. B. Yeats to proclaim the appearance of "the savage god" as he watched the eruption consequent upon Alfred Jarry's Père Ubu, *in which Ubu steps on stage and proclaims "merdre." It is hard to tell whether it was the near-appearance of the word "shit" in public that scandalized, or the clinamen that introduced an extra* r, *a gratuitous but portentous supplement to an already offensive signifier. In any case, Jarry's attraction to the clinamen is clear, for as a law governing the exception rather than the rule, the Lucretian swerve is a 'pataphysical phenomenon par excellence. Jarry, in fact, installs the clinamen along with syzygy (an astronomical term referring to a temporary planetary conjunction or opposition) as the two governing concepts in 'pataphysical method.*[4]

The Lucretian legacy begets a sense of the letter as both "precise" and "inexact"; the atom-letter is libido without organ, both slave and master, compliant component and maverick particle in one. In such a system writing functions in general like Thoreau's figure of the saunterer, "sans terre" in his speculative etymology, wandering afield not astray, like Walt Whitman's casual persona loafing at ease in the opening of "Song of Myself," declaring that "every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you." The psychological profile appropriate to such a prospect is what Freud calls a "wandering signification," Bedeutungswandel. *The importance of flexibility in the system is paramount. Georges Perec, although compliant with Oulipo's compositional procedures, argues that "the system of constraints—and this is important—must be destroyed. It must not be rigid; there must be some play in it; it must, as they say, 'creak' a bit; it must not be completely coherent; there must be a clinamen—it's from Epicurean atomic theory. 'The world functions because from the outset there is a lack of balance.' According to Paul Klee, 'Genius is the error in the system'."*

Nathaniel Mackey interprets the noise of the Dogon shuttle that produces speech (see Griaule in "Cosmology," p. 372 above) as "the noise upon which the word is based, the discrepant foundation of all coherence and articulation, of the purchase upon the world fabrication affords." A "refractive obliquity," the creaking of the word testifies to the "fissure, fracture, incongruity, the rickety, imperfect fit between word and world"; its dissonance is "an opening, an opportune alarm sounded against presumed equivalence, presumed assurances of unequivocal fit." To return to a Lucretian vocabulary, by its creak the word announces its creative impairment, the paradoxical endowment of a disfiguration or *swerve, the enabling clinamen of its deviation from the norm, from semantic destiny. "We may come, touch and go, from atoms and ifs but we're presurely destined to be odd's without ends."*

The atomic descent of atoms transposed to the moral metaphysics of the Bible results in a fall*—an itinerary of dejection reinscribed by Freud's practice of the analytic case (*der Fall *in German) in his preoccupation with the indispensable if repressed detail. But the detail need not always mark a negation; its descent is not necessarily an expulsion. The serendipitous duplication of phonemes within a language, and from one language to another, affords a deviant parasitic ingenuity. It is in the character of the letter—in its subordinate role as a kind of geological sediment within the word—to be overlooked, a condition allegorized by Jacques Lacan in his "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter'" (epistolary in Poe's tale). Derrida characterizes Lacan's version as an "atomistic topology of the signifier" and, after remarking the detective Dupin's mention of Epicurean atomism, Derrida addresses the letter in the errancy of its transit: "The divisibility of the letter . . . is what chances and sets off course, without guarantee of return, the remaining [*restance*] of anything whatsoever: a letter does* not always *arrive at its destination, and from the moment that this possibility belongs to its structure one can say that it never truly arrives, that when it does arrive its capacity not to arrive torments it with an internal drifting." Derrida's own analytic method is to drift or wander from topos to topos, citation to citation, by means of the errant conduits provided in homonyms and puns that collapse meanings—a method notably aligned with the clinamen in "My Chances/*Mes Chances: *A Rendezvous with Some Epicurean Stereophonies."*

"A lapsus is revealing in the sense that it gives another truth its chance." The paradigmatic lapse or slip for Jacques Derrida is the graphic mark, the exemplary duplicity of the letter. A mark is a singularity, but one that can be re-marked in stereotypic reallocation to another position, another role: "the identity of a mark is also its difference and its differential relation, varying each time according to context, to the network of other marks. The ideal iterability that forms the structure of all marks is that which undoubtedly allows them to be released from any context"—and this "essential insignificance" is what enables each mark "to divide itself and to give rise to the proliferation of other ideal identities. Iterability is what allows a mark to be used more than once. It is more than one. It multiplies and divides itself internally. This imprints the capacity for diversion within its very movement. In the destination . . . there is thus a principle of indetermination, chance, luck, or of destinerring." Derrida's well-known concept of "différance" names the narrow margin by which one meaning is differentiated from another in generative swerve or "atomystique." The clinamen is also basic to any event of citation, for any sign when placed between quotation marks "can break with every given context, and engender infinitely new contexts in an absolutely nonsaturable fashion." The action of the clinamen is covert but central in Derrida's detection of the generalized equivocation of a writing in Finnegans Wake *which, "no longer translating one language into another on the basis of their common cores of sense, circulates throughout all languages at once, accumulates their energies, actualizes their most secret consonances,*

discloses their furthermost common horizon, cultivates their associative syntheses instead of avoiding them, and rediscovers the poetic value of passivity."

Lyotard clarifies what it is in the passive declination of the swerve that is pertinent to writing, exhorting us "to love inscription not because it communicates and contains, but through what its production necessitates, not because it channels, but because it drifts." Lyotard illuminates the riverrun commencement of Finnegans Wake, *emphasizing the stream within atomic drift.* "Derivatio *[diverting] is not simply leaving a shore, but diverting a* rivus *[stream], a course, a fluidity. Where it goes we were not going. . . . What joy if* ripa *[shore] were derived from* rivus, *if this were the streaming which determined the shore! The shore of the stream, of the ocean, displaces itself along with it." For Lyotard, drifting enacts not only the supreme Odyssean condition but "by itself is the end of all critique."*

This drifting of the clinamen also manifests itself in the quotidian and performative, finding expression in the everyday practices of both the Surrealists and the Situationist International (SI). The atomic motion of the clinamen informs the latter's method of dérive *(literally "drifting"), employed in the urban interventions and manifestations of the SI throughout the 1960s. Guy Debord, a founding theorist of the SI, describes the* dérive *as "a technique of transient passage through varied ambiences." The* dérive *is a "psychogeographical method" in which "one or more persons during a certain period drop their usual motives for movement and action, their relations, their work and leisure activities, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there." The Situationist* dérive *is clearly inspired by the ambulatory automatism of the Surrealists who in turn were indebted to Baudelaire's* flâneur, *a figure itself inspired by Poe's story "A Man of the Crowd." (This chain of indebtedness is salutary evidence of the clinamen's initiatory power.) André Breton described the street, "with its disturbances and its glances [as] my own true element. There I partook, as nowhere else . . . of the wind of circumstance." In Sadie Plant's words, "Surrealism had invoked a world of floating encounters through which the hunter of marvels drifts according to whim and desire."*

For Andrew Lang, the clinamen underlies the structure of the great mythical theme that he calls the "separable force," that partial object which, detached and appropriated, bestows power on the thief (the lock of Samson's hair, for instance); a "revolution of voluptuousness, the physics of Venus chosen over that of Mars," according to Michel Serres. "The minimal angle of turbulence produces the first spirals here and there. It is literally revolution. Or it is the first evolution toward something else other than the same. Turbulence perturbs the chain, troubling the flow of the identical as Venus has troubled Mars." Such a turn to pleasure is a turning aside or deflection of the martial, rectilinear free-fall of atoms in unalleviated void. This charged space summons a sensual manifold and a disturbing static, which Michel Pierssens depicts as an insect proliferation: "Words form swarms which a mysterious Eros reassembles and destroys." An erotic distraction is punctuated by the downbeat and the blue note, the contaminating stutter with its weird eloquence: duende *in flamenco, deep blues of the Mississippi Delta. Catherine Clément calls it "syncope":*

The queen of rhythm, syncope is also the mother of *dissonance;* it is the source, in short, of a harmonious and productive discord. The process allows some limping before the harmony, however: it is sometimes said that syncope "attacks" the weak beat, like an enzyme, a wildcat, or a virus; and yet the last beat is the saving one. Attack and haven, collision; a fragment of the beat disappears, and of this disappearance, rhythm is born.

A disturbing but informing particularity, the clinamen is swerve as inclination, *initiating the body's erotic profundity. Roland Barthes makes a distinction in his Epicurean summa,* The Pleasure of the Text, *that clarifies this rapture of the swerve: "The word can be erotic on two opposing conditions, both excessive: if it is extravagantly repeated, or on the contrary, if it is unexpected, succulent in its newness." Like the plummeting atom, the word pronounces its eros (the secret pattern of its inherence)*[5] *in its tropisms. The written consignment of the word is an erotic envelope inviting habitation. To despatch a letter (in the epistolary sense) is to provoke an opening, a release and unfolding. The Russian poet Osip Mandelstam, recalling the staging of desire in the story of Eros and Psyche, sees that "the word is a Psyche. The living word does not signify an object, but freely chooses, as though for a dwelling place, this or that objective significance, materiality, some beloved body. And around the thing the word hovers freely, like a soul around a body that has been abandoned but not forgotten."*

J. J. G. Wilkinson, the Swedenborgian homeopathist of Victorian London, is also an expositor of the Lucretian swerve as amative synthesis of human relations: "We come [by clinamen] to mind, to inclination, desire, love, in the atoms, to a mutual recognition and appreciation; very near to a cosmical heart and intellect as their sum. Atoms with such a sidling and slope and attraction and final adhesion to their fellows, are clearly prophecies of wills and understandings, of men and women, in fact of Darby and Joan who are their ultimate outcome." Joan and Darby are names of amatory attractors as well; and suitably, Lucretius's poem is dedicated to Venus Procreatrix. The clinamen atomorum *is also the* clinamen amatorum, *and* voluntas *is* voluptas *("That will [voluntas] we wrest from the fates/Enables us to follow our pleasure [voluptas]"): swerve as inclination and precipitous ("catastrophic") attraction. Lucretius calls Venus* alma *("nourishing," "giving increase"), connoting an organic cycle of birth and growth to maturity, attributing this procreative power to the material atoms themselves (which he calls "seeds" and "engendering bodies"), in effect gendering and eroticizing Epicurean atomic theory. Venus* alma *is even installed in wordplay (that* clinamen *par excellence) when Lucretius puns upon matter (*materies*) and mother (*mater*): "If each thing hadn't its own* matter, *how could a* mother *be the same as her issue?"*

Michel Pierssens writes of language as "a chaos of atoms in which the clinamen*-desire brings forth the figures of the World, the meaning of a universe for a Subject. This reveals the infinity of meaning, which desire will henceforth pursue, like an enticement which it has created for itself, throughout an interminable text which it invents in order to effect the reunion with itself which it will forever be* *denied." The path of the subject through the validating field of the other is a dialectic familiar to Freud, and theorized* as *a letter ("insistent" in the unconscious) by Lacan. But by linking desire and love to the clinamen, Pierssens restores the deviant individual to a pleroma of errancy; and as Roland Barthes says, "errantry does not align—it produces iridescence: what results is the nuance."*

1 "God created the world not by the logos but by a slip of the tongue. . . . To create the world it needed six slips of the tongue." In this bold revisioning of Genesis, Geoffrey Hartman underscores the creative potential within parapraxis, which in itself is indicative of an aberrant potential in the letter.

2 Novalis argued for a true philosophical insight that would introduce systemlessness (*Systemlösigkeit*) into a system. Only such a system, whose literary expression is irony and whose generic manifestation is the fragment, "can avoid the mistakes of the system and be related neither to injustice nor to anarchy." Emmanuel Levinas offers a more memorable variant when citing the Portuguese proverb "God writes straight by crooked lines."

3 Russian Futurists were not alone in exploiting the humorous potential of the clinamen. As we see in Jarry (or in Charlie Chaplin for that matter), the slippage of the clinamen is a source of hilarity. Tobias Smollett also exploits the fictive and humorous potential of this atomistic model in *The History and Adventures of an Atom* (1769), where an adventurous atom speaks from within the brain of Nathaniel Peacock, haberdasher in St. Giles, who not surprisingly "began to think [him]self insane" on first discovering the fact of the solitary atomus loquens. Smollett exploits the incipient host-parasite relation of constitutent atom and Cartesian cogito to produce a Rabelaisian fiction of contemporary social and political satire.

4 Syzygy is adopted by Jarry as the basic rule for writing. A "word must transfix a momentary conjunction or opposition of meanings"; but it also can suggests a "crystalline form . . . emerg[ing] at intervals out of the random movements of the cosmos"—a concept more familiar to us now as fractal. We might mention in passing that Bloom credits Jarry as his source for the term clinamen.

5 And the word *eros* would be anagramatized as *rose* and *sore* were English the language of Kabbalistic *Temurah.*

Lucretius

From *De Rerum Natura*

For the *same* Seeds compose both Earth and Seas,
The Sun, and Moon, Fruits, Animals, and Trees,
But their *contexture,* or their *motion* disagrees.
So in my Verse are Letters *common* found
To many *words* unlike in sense and sound;
Such great variety bare change affords
Of order ith' few Elements of Words.

*

And hence, as We discours'd before, we find
It matters much with what first Seeds are joyn'd,
Or how, or what position they maintain,
What motion give, and what receive again:
And that the Seeds remaining still the same,
Their order chang'd, of wood are turn'd to flame.
Just as the *letters* little change affords
Ignis and *Lignum,* two quite different words.

*

But now my *Muse,* how proper *Objects* please
The other *Senses,* sing; tis told with ease:
First then, we *sounds,* and voice, and noises hear;
When *Seeds* of sound come in, and *strike* the Ear:
All *Sound* is *Body,* for with painful force
It moves the sense, when with an eager course
It scrapes the jaws, and makes the Speaker hoarse:
The *crouding* Seeds of Sound, that strive to goe
Thro narrow Nerves, do grate in passing thro:
Tis certain then that *Voice,* that thus can wound,
Is all *material; Body* every *sound.*
Besides tis known, to talk a tedious day,
How much it weakens, what it takes away
From all the Nerves, how all the powers decay;
But chiefly if tis loud, and spoke with noise,
And therefore little Bodies frame the voice:
Because the Speaker looseth of his own;
His weakness tells him many parts are gone:
But more; the *Harshness* in a voice proceeds
From *Rough,* the *Sweetness* from the *Smoother* Seeds,
Nor are the *Figures* of the Seeds *alike,*
Which from the *grave* and murmuring *Trumpet* strike,
To *those* of *dying Swans,* whose latest breath
In mournful strains laments approaching Death:
This *voice* when rising from the Lungs, it breaks
Thro jaws and lips, and all the *passion* speaks,
The *Tongue* forms into *words,* with curious Art,
The *Tongue,* and *Lips* do fashion every part,
And therefore if the *Speaker* be but *near,*
If distance *fit,* you may distinctly hear
Each Word, each Air, because it keeps the *frame*
It first receiv'd, its *figure* still the same:
But if the Space be *great,* thro all the Air
The sound must fly diffus'd, and perish there:
And therefore tho we hear a murmuring noise;
No words, the Air confounds, and breaks the Voice,
Besides, *one* sentence when pronounc'd aloud
By strong lung'd *Cryers* fills the listning Croud,
Breaks into *many,* for it strikes them all,
To every *single* Ear it tels the Tale;
But some parts of the Voice, that miss the Ear,
Fly thro the Air *diffus'd* and perish there:
Parts strike on *solid* buildings, and restor'd
Bring back again the *Image* of the Word.

*

But now since *Organs* fit, since *Voice,* and *Tongue,*
By *Nature's* gift bestow'd, to *Man* belong,
What wonder is it then, that *man* should frame,
And give each *different Thing* a *different* Name?
Since *Beasts* themselves do make a *different* noise,
Opprest by pains and fear, or *brisk* with joys.

*

Well then, since *Beasts* and *Birds,* tho *dumb,* commence
As various *voices,* as their various *sense;*
How easie was it then for *men* to frame,
And give each *different* Thing a *different* Name.

Translated by Thomas Creech

Gunnar Olsson

Malevich Torpedoed

There is a double helix in the social sciences too.

•

Shot through the tube of ontological categorization comes a torpedo of power. At the center of this projectile is a turbo-prop engine designed according to the identity-difference principle of the equal sign. On each side of the parallel lines are forces of opposite modes of being. As these are turned on and off, the torpedo propels itself into the ontological transformations that constitute human action. It is the fluctuation between signifier and signified that gives rise to the spiraling movement of a double helix.

In the ethical operationalization of the ∟, the grenade sucks desire; in the dialectical indifference of the /, it spews castration. In the hole of point ∟, aesthetics is transformed into epistemology; in the void of =, epistemology turns to ontology; in the unnamable of /, ontology becomes metaphysics. Quod Erat Inveniendum.

•

Properly aimed, the torpedo may blow existence apart. Rescue operations, Red Cross missions. Gates closed. Diana at rest.

•

It is the gate-keeping duty of Janus to admit some conclusions and reject some others. Applying the stamp of QED is straightforward, because all it takes is a check that conventional reasoning rules have been followed. Employing the QEF requires more courage, for what is thereby accepted must be anchored in the body itself. Using the approval stamp of the QEI is so rare that it is almost incredible; the challenge is that when I look out of my window and see something I never saw before, then it is uncertain whether the signs reflect social things or solipsist mind. Out there, in here? You or I. Madness of Nowhere. Power stripped bare by her bachelors even: Quod Erat, "which was to be"; the panties of Demonstrandum, Faciendum, and Inveniendum whisked to the public.

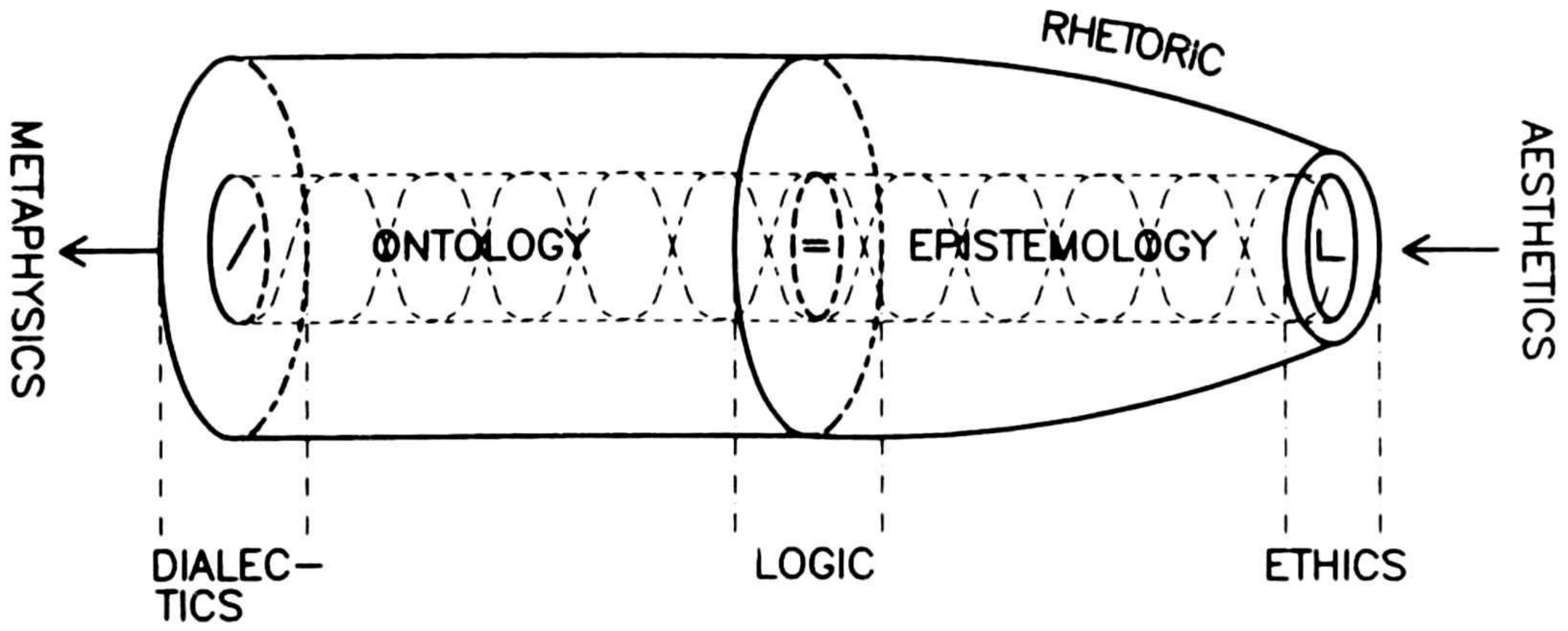
Encore un coup de dés. Doubling the stakes, miming the twin. Dice rolling across the pages. Three. Two. One. Zero. Blast-off!

And yet. Whenever in doubt, merely note that in the act of reading these words, you thereby confirm that the points, lines, and planes are not mine alone. Perhaps they are what I sometimes believe: graven images of intimate communication.

•

And at the very moment that I saw the temple gates closing, they were suddenly thrown open again. What remains is nothing but a faint memory, an image blown away like the morning mist: Janus and Diana briefly caught in the middle of the act.

TORPEDO OF HUMAN ACTION


RHETORIC
METAPHYSICS
AESTHETICS
/
ONTOLOGY
=
EPISTEMOLOGY
L
DIALEC-
TICS
LOGIC
ETHICS

SPECIFICATION

BASIC PLANES: *Ethics*
Logic
Dialectics

SURFACE LINES: *Rhetoric*

TRANSITION POINTS:
L S
= $\frac{S}{s}$
/ s

IMMISSION: *Aesthetic Desire*

EMISSION: *Metaphysical Violence*

COMPRESSION STAGES:

1 *Aesthestics*

2 L

3 *Epistemology*

4 =

5 *Ontology*

6 /

7 *Metaphysics*

8 –

Q.E.I.

Michel Serres

Vortex

The mur-mur has passed through the wall.

All is nought: death, sleep, and the night. The plain.

Background noise is settled in this blank nullity: the breeze breathes.

Listen: what is born amidst the noises of breath, in the midst of the breath settled in the blank whiteness of the plain, what is born ought to be a signal. Like a signal high upon the barbed noise, indistinct, as little differentiated as the plain itself. Yet no, it is not a signal, it is a noise still. The repetitive background noise is the gray deep and the breathing breeze. What is born, soul, flame, jingle bell, what is born from the blank is a dance, and the dance of a dwarf, as tiny as the lapping in the breeze's smile. The signal would be high upon the waves, the dwarf is low like the other waves, not distinguishable from them. The dwarf is dancing at the tip of a surge, see his foot upon the noisy sea.

The dwarf's foot leaping, dashing, the dwarf's foot littler than the little dwarf, is a fraction of the dancing wave, the foot at the tip of the surge, the tip of the crest of the swell, now *that* is what a fluctuation is.

The noise, gray deep and breeze that breathes, the noise, the surge, is a multiplicity of which we do not know the sum. We do not know how to integrate it in a sound, a sense, a harmony, we do not have a concept for it. The second noise, the noise that is born, as a noise lodged in the noise, a noise in its turn settled in the blankness of space, that second noise is not a fluxion, a tiny little meaning, a local concept, a tiny little god in his little department, a miniature, a scaled-down model. No, it is not a fluxion, it is a fluctuation. The dwarf, the djinn, is neither man nor petty god, it is a misshapen being, a shadow, a vampire, a crane, a dragon, claws in its wings, a locust. You never see it full-size, a dwarf will not get bigger. Natural language has long been admirably expressing these inchoative, frequentative forms, with which scholarly rationality, a bit pedestrian, has difficulty catching up. Our language leaps and dances, rationality walks in step. Every step is alike, a fluxion, every leap, every fluctuation maintains its singularity.

The fluctuation passes through the mesh of bifurcations. Hopping on one leg. Even the *belle noiseuse* lets only one foot be seen, the other one is in the air, absent. Hopping on one leg: like the sound of a crowd thundering and rolling, now collapsing, now getting bigger. Our dovetail is back again, our instauration, and the old poisonous stroke. Everything starts all over again, at every step the fluctuation makes a choice, here at every strophe, catastrophe, either to die or to get bigger.

*

The djinns are familiar with the physics of Lucretius, they are particles of noise, jolts, tips of flames, jingle bells. Ill individuated, dragons or locusts? Badly congregated, a herd, a swarm, a cloud, barely aggregated. Undefined locally, globally they go further than Lucretian physics. But their cloud, flying in the empty space, the noise of scattershot in the blank silence, carries a lightning flash at its flank.

The flash of lightning steers the universe. The blade of rudder bifurcates to the left, to the right with its dovetail. There is inclination. The lightning forks, it inclines, a zigzag.

The roofbeam is bent, the wall bows and the house is tottering. The roofbeam is slanting, the house is slanting. The *mur,* the wall, the first noise repeated by the echo, the *mur,* the wall, the first obstacle, the fragile auricle, the wall assumes the warp and bends.

See inclination everywhere.

*

The expansive fizzle of sea noise is broken up into fluctuations. A given one of them, dwarfish, singular begins gathering followers. Why? We do not know. A thousand, a hundred thousand, unique, have started out, no doubt, and then collapsed into the stillness of the noise, washed out by the *noise.* A thousand, a hundred thousand, others having made two or three dovetails, returned to the gray deep and the breeze. So many little flashes fading rapidly away, so many whisperings rising, I thought I heard a call in the uproar, a signal amid the pandemonium, the wave, heaving up a moment, falls again. Why is that one, that unique one, not lost? Answer: why were the others, those unique ones, lost?

A head emerges from the crowd, eyes, mouth, neck, perhaps even from time to time the shoulders. A few heads, here and there, emerge and, with their barely open eyes, seem to look at that mouth, be amazed, and let their own gape wide in their turn, is this a phenomenon on its way, like a chorus heralding itself, no, everything has gone back to the choppy brief swell, and this happens a hundred times a day. Is background noise a welter of aborted beginnings? Is it messages only half spoken? The clinking cacophonic collision of unaddressed bottles in the sea? Hear multiply how the immense things that our pretension calls history commence. Conceive conceptionless how time can begin.

*

The wall assumes the warp and bends, it inclines.

The echo repeats the voice, the noise rolls like a wave. The inclination was the onset of the turning motion, the spiral of the vortex is its upshot. Let us flee beneath the spiral of the deep winding stair.

We do not really know how this turning motion takes place. Repetitiveness is necessary for it. A fluctuation is repeated, or it encounters, by chance, the same. An echo is necessary for it, in things, and imitation, among men. Redundancy is necessary for it. It enters noise. These are the first of the forms of order: redundancy, repetition, echo, imitation. An echo in the case of rumor, a mimetic act in the case of fury. No circle without a return of the same.

Our languages have always heard, have always expressed well the wheeling force and its return upon itself. Rhythm is a fluctuation of the rhesis, the surge. The dwarf called a djinn is falsely Arabian, I hear him whisper in Greek. The Greek language recognizes that a fragment of the outflow may flow, circulate. But French also knows as much. Rhythm is no more mysterious than our cadence. A cadence, a fragment of a fall, a fluctuation of decadence, cadence turns back what seems irreversible. The flowing flux turns through rhythm, and what falls comes back on itself in cadence. Our natural languages have paid attention to an order formed through a fall or a flowing out, among the noises of the waters, and in unexpected, chaotic conditions.

These languages dance, in cadence, at the edge of the noise, they come from it, and they return to it, they turn back on themselves. To arise from the primal noise, they need repetitiveness, an echo, a rhythm, redundancy. In the beginning is the echo: murmur.

*

When languages talk about themselves, they begin the circle again. They come from rumor in a whirlwind. First through echo, repetition. Then through redundancy. Then through rhythm and cadence. These circles follow one another every which way. The unexpected feeds the circle that maintains the unexpected and acclimates it to the predictable, thus does the turbulence get bigger. When languages know how to talk about themselves, they only create a further circle. Any metalanguage closes the loop of another course, slightly shifted, to be sure, but of the same form as those first little rhythmic poems. Metaphysics comes from the same whirlwind as music. Reflection, at whatever level, is a loop, sameness and different, in the whirling whole of the organization of languages by themselves. The more one knows how to talk about languages, the better languages know how to talk. As long, of course, as they continue to hear the noise.

*

The swarm wheels, hissing, the multiple rolls, whirling. The poem in the form of a double cone has the shape of the vortex. The nascent form of language, the nascent form of Aphrodite, the form of any nascent phenomenon, bodies, things, signs.

Translated by Geneviève James and James Nielson

Norman O. Brown

Fraction

To eat and to be eaten. The grain must be ground, the wine pressed; the bread must be broken. The true body is a body broken.

> Nothing can be sole or whole
> That has not been rent.

Yeats, "Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop."
Cf. Dylan Thomas, "This bread I break." Frye, *Fearful Symmetry,* 290.

To be is to be vulnerable. The defense mechanisms, the character-armor, is to protect from life. Frailty alone is human; a broken, a ground-up (contrite) heart.
Cf. Weil, *La Pesanteur et la grâce,* 125.

In the upper sector, the realm of the gods, "whose carefree life, dedicated to aesthetic pleasures, is indicated by dance and music. On account of this one-sided dedication to their own pleasures, they forget the true nature of life, the limitations of their own existence, the sufferings of others, their own transiency. They do not know that they live only in a state of temporary harmony. . . . They live, so to say, on the accumulated capital of past good deeds without adding new values. They are gifted with beauty, longevity and freedom from pain, but just this lack of suffering, of obstacles and exertion, deprives the harmony of their existence of all creative impulses." "Rebirth in heavenly realms is not an aim which Buddhists think worth striving for. . . . It leads to a strengthening of the ego-illusion and to a deeper entanglement in the *saṁsāric* world."
Govinda, *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism,* 238–239.

There is a seal or sepulcher to be broken, a rock to be broke open, to disclose the living water; an eruption. Begin then with a fracture, a cesura, a rent; opening a crack in this fallen world, a shaft of light.
Cf. Richard, *Mallarmé,* 539.

Literal meanings are icons become stone idols; the stone sepulcher, the stone tables of the law. The New Testament remained hidden in the Old, like water in the rock; until the cross of Christ broke the rock open. Iconoclasm, the word like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces.
Cf. Luther cited in Hahn, "Luthers Auslegungsgrundsätze," 190n. Jeremiah XXIII, 29.

Open is broken. There is no breakthrough without breakage. A struggle with an angel, which leaves us scarred, or lame. Every dream is a struggle; the possible confronting the real, abruptly.

Man the measure of all things is the microcosmic man; in little all the sphere. Stretch yourself, then, to the breaking point: *"Ehr sey also hoch, dicke, breyt und lang, wye er am kreuz gehangen hat."* To be so stretched is to be crucified; it is the crucified body that is the measure of all things: *statera facta corporis.*
Müntzer cited in Holl, "Luther und die Schwärmer," 437. Weil, *La Pesanteur et la grâce,* 109.

The crucified body, the crucified mind. The norm is not normality but schizophrenia, the split, broken, crucified mind. "If we throw a crystal to the ground, it breaks, but it does not break haphazard; in accordance with the lines of cleavage it falls into fragments, where limits were already determined by the structure of the crystal, although they were invisible. Psychotics are fissured and splintered structures such as these. We cannot deny them a measure of that awe with which madmen were regarded by the people of ancient times." Split the stick and there is Jesus.

Freud, *New Introductory Lectures,* 80. Cage, *Silence,* 70.

Stretch yourself, to the breaking point. It is not true unless it hurts; the evidence is martyrdom. "All truths are bloody truths for me." We do not know the truth because we repress it; and we repress it because it is painful.

Kaufmann, *Nietzsche,* 68.

To the breaking point. Carrying the thought through to the end; crucial experiments, *experimentum crucis.* A witness (martyr) steadfast to the end, tested *in extremis.* Extremism. Truth is not in safety or in the middle. *"Les oeuvres d'art naissent toujours de qui a affronté le danger, de qui est allé jusqu'au bout d'une expérience."*

Rilke cited in Bachelard, *La Poétique de l'espace,* 198.

Aphorism is exaggeration, or grotesque; in psychoanalysis nothing is true except the exaggerations; and in poetry, *"cet extrémisme est le phénomène même de l'élan poétique."* Aphorism is exaggeration, extravagant language; the road of excess which leads to the palace of wisdom.

Adorno, *Minima Moralia,* 78. Blake, *Marriage of Heaven and Hell,* pl. 7. Bachelard, *La Poétique de l'espace,* 198.

Exaggeration or extravagance; not to count the cost. Go for broke. Aphorism is recklessness; it goes too far. Intellect is courage; the courage to risk its own life; to play with madness. *"Poètes, voici la loi mystérieuse: Aller au delà. Aller au delà, extravaguez, soit, comme Homère, comme Ezéchiel, comme Pindare, comme Salomon, comme Archilogue, comme Horace, comme Saint-Paul, comme Saint-Jean, comme Saint-Jérôme, comme Tertullien, comme Pétrarque, comme Alighieri, comme Ossian, comme Cervantes, comme Rabelais, comme Shakespeare, comme Milton, comme Mathurin Régnier, comme Agrippa d'Aubigné, comme Molière, comme Voltaire. Extravaguez avec ces doctes, extravaguez avec ces justes, extravaguez avec ces sages. Quos vult AUGERE Jupiter dementat."* Aphorism, the form of the mad truth, the Dionysian form.

Hugo, "Promontorium Somnii," 309.

Only the exaggerations are true. *Credo quia absurdum;* as in parables or poetry. Aphoristic form is suicide, or self-sacrifice; for truth must die. Intellect is sacrifice of intellect, or fire; which burns up as it gives light.

Cf. *Bhagavad Gita,* IV, 19.

Broken flesh, broken mind, broken speech. Truth, a broken body: fragments, or aphorisms; as opposed to systematic form or methods: "Aphorisms, representing a knowledge broken, do invite men to inquire farther; whereas Methods, carrying the show of a total, do secure men, as if they were at farthest."

Bacon in McLuhan, *Gutenberg Galaxy,* 102–103.

Systematic form attempts to evade the necessity of death in the life of the mind as of the body; it has immortal longings on it, and so it remains dead. *Ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt.* The rigor is *rigor mortis;* systems are wooden crosses, Procrustean beds on which the living mind is pinned. Aphorism is the form of death and resurrection: "the form of eternity."

Kaufmann, *Nietzsche,* 66.

Aphorism, or symbolism, as in *Finnegans Wake:* "A mode of broken or syncopated manipulation to permit *inclusive* or simultaneous perception of a total or diversified field. Such, indeed, is symbolism by definition—a collocation, a *parataxis* . . . without a point of view or lineal connection or sequential order." Symbolism, or grotesque: "A fine grotesque is the expression, in a moment, by a series of symbols thrown together in bold and fearless connection, of truths which it would have taken a long time to express in any verbal way, and of which the connection is left for the beholder to work out for himself; the gaps, left or overleapt by the haste of the imagination, forming the grotesque character."
McLuhan quoting Ruskin, *Gutenberg Galaxy,* 266–267.

Systematic form; generalities. All knowledge is particular, goes into the natural man in bits, a scrap here, a scrap there. Food is taken in bites. Bread broken to feed five thousand.
Cf. Blake in Frye, *Fearful Symmetry,* 15. Pound, *Kulchur,* 98–99.

Broken form. Against beauty as such. No form nor comeliness. Abrupt; uneven; inconsistent. By Ciceronian standards, *mutila quaedam et hiantia.*
Isaiah LIII, 2. Cicero, *Orator,* 32.

"A new heroic era has opened," Mandelstam wrote in 1921, "in the life of the word. The word is flesh and bread. It shares the fate of bread and flesh: suffering."
Fanger, "The Prose of Osip Mandelstam," 47.

Beyond atomism. Fragmentation unto dust, and the word becomes seminal again. The sower soweth the word. Dionysus broken and scattered is seed scattered. But if it die it bringeth forth much fruit. The body is made whole by being broken.
John XII, 24.

Sanskrit *bindu:* "This word, which has many meanings, like 'point, dot, zero, drop, germ, seed, semen,' . . . It is the point from which inner and outer space have their origin and in which they become *one* again." The thought, poem, is a cell or seed; a germ of living thought: growing from nothing to ripeness. Instead of the dead wood of systems, the tree of life; ramifications; branched thoughts new-grown with pleasant pain.
Govinda, *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism,* 116.

Broken speech; speech broken by silence. To let the silence in is symbolism. "In symbol there is concealment and yet revelation: here therefore, by Silence and by Speech acting together, comes a double significance."
Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus,* Book III, ch. III, "Symbols."

Alphabetic Dimensions

"Such is the alphabet's power . . ." (Barthes 1985, 119)
"primarily a written or 'visible' language . . ." (Parkes 1993, 23)
Isidore considered letters as signs without sounds (Parkes 1993, 21)
"This letter Q. . ." (Tory 1927, 33)
"Whatsoever is capable of sufficient differences . . ." (Bacon 1905, 121)
"we Find in Bacon's cipher . . ." (Wood and Bernasconi 1988, 94)
"subtly separate common readers . . ." (Stephens 1975, 98)
"The intention of [the acroamatic method] . . ." (Bacon 1905, 531)
"notes of things by congruity" (Bacon 1674, 166)
"Poetry builds up the very nature of dwelling . . ." (Heidegger 1971b, 227)
"It is language that tells us about the nature of a thing . . ." (Heidegger 1971b, 146)
"stereometrical letter-figures . . ." (Damen 1974, 367)
"the proteiform graph . . ." (Joyce 1939, 107)
L N N E O P Y (Hélène est née au pays grec) (Breunig 1977, 60)
"the potential elevation beyond WORDS" (Isou 1983b, 72)
"Not the word but the letter . . ." (Schwitters 1993, 223)
A denotes inhalation . . . (Isou, 1983c, 76)
"Metagraphics or post-writing . . ." (Isou, 1983a, 77)

footnotes:
"hypergraphic perspective" (Curtay 1983b, 83)
"anti-dada" (Isou 1973, 79)
"confusionniste" (Isou 1973, 51)
Schwitters . . . a third-rate imitator, and a crook (Isou 1973, 91)
a Germanic sub-sub-Cocteau (Isou 1973, 94)
Raoul Hausmann (a forger and plagiarist of Lettrism) (Isou 1973, 105)
"He hated Hausmann . . ." (Chopin 1983, 64)

Rongo-Rongo
"there was no possibility . . ." (Schwartz 1975, 197)
"that a symbolism . . ." (Schwartz 1975, 199)
"is the mother of the scripts . . ." (Jensen 1970, 360)

Geofroy Tory
Monas Hieroglyphica (see Clulee 1988, 92)

Arabic Mystical Alphabet
"the letters are containers . . ." (Chittick 1989, 129)
"the letters . . . supplement revelation . . ." (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 1994, 597)
"the true men of God . . ." (Schimmel 1984, 79)
"Letters written with ink . . ." (Schimmel 1984, 89)
"Words are not permanent . . ." (W. Williams 1970, 158)

"Man's heart . . ." (Schimmel 1984, 87)
"In the name of Allah . . ." (Schimmel 1984, 83)
"Every poet could write . . ." (Schimmel 1975, 413)
"The mystical view sees in the *futuhat* . . ." (Khatibi 1976, 204)

Benjamin Paul Blood
"philosophy must pass from words . . ." (W. James 1987, 1312)
"loaded to the muzzle . . ." (Blood 1984, 108)
"There are no differences . . ." (W. James 1992, 678)

bp Nichol
"the science . . ." (Jarry 1965, 192)

Spelling, Saving, Spending

"language is an egg . . ." (Deleuze 1990, 280)
"This is the alphabet . . ." (W. Williams 1970, 282)
"not one of the tongues . . ." (Illich 1993, 71)
"As language was at its beginning . . ." (Johnson 1963, 3)
"whether or not consonants were silent" (Partridge 1971, 38)
"A *further development* of the alphabetical script . . ." (Jensen 1970, 583)
Bishop Stephen Gardiner, Sir John Cheke, and Sir Thomas Smith (R. F. Jones 1953, 143)
The history of orthography, according to Smith (Jones 1953, 146)
"The young learner . . ." (Holybrand 1953, 3)
"the traditional spelling . . ." (Jespersen 1907, 19)
"the best speech used of the learned" (Hart 1570, 67)
"Muɔo se corobo2a mi pa2te . . ." (Alemán 1950, 116)
Emperor Claudius (Pitman and St. John 1969, 60)
William Hogarth's father Richard (R. Paulson 1991, 4)
"we go on as we have done . . ." (Franklin 1972, 175)
From a parallel-text edition of Shaw's play (Shaw 1962, 132–133)
as tabulated by J. Pitman and St. John (Pitman and St. John 1969, 318)
"From the scientific point of view . . ." (Jensen 1970, 583)
"We all know the old alphabet . . ." (Pitman and St. John 1969, 103)
"A language does not develop . . ." (Lecercle 1990, 137)
"Ahbeesee defeegee . . ." (Joyce 1961, 58)

John Hart
"the first bit of connected discourse written phonetically" (R. F. Jones 1953, 149)

Charles de Brosses
"the material circumstances" (Kroll 1992, 191)
"words are what the mouth molds . . ." (Kroll 1992, 191)
"physically determined . . ." (Genette 1995, 67)

Sequoyah (George Guess)
None of the North American Indian nations had a written language . . . (McLoughlin 1984, 184)
they spoke only English . . . (McLoughlin 1990, 39)

Alexander Melville Bell
Leon Scott's "phonautograph" (Ronell 1989, 332)
"The object of Visible Speech is not . . ." (Bell n.d.(b), 3)
"wuld-inglis . . ." (Bell 1888, 27)

Retentions and Secretions
"Listen: a fourworded wavespeech . . ." (Joyce 1961, 49)
"Almost human the way it . . ." (Joyce 1961, 121)
"Is *thinking* impossible . . ." (Bruns 1974, 43)
language is already waiting for Godot (Certeau 1986, 182)
"Every book is a quotation . . ." (Emerson 1983, 634)
"Every dimmed letter in it is a copy . . ." (Joyce 1939, 424)
"our turfbrown mummy . . ." (Joyce 1939, 194)
"uncontrolled inventiveness" (Lévi-Strauss 1969, 10)
"coincides with its object . . ." (Lévi-Strauss 1969, 6)
"a mobile equilibrium . . ." (Musil 1995, 272)
"a myth does not *say* things . . ." (Wagner 1978, 252)
"what is said of what is said" (Olson 1971, 47)
"'a goat is not a very good pig . . .'" (Wagner 1978, 28)
"It wasn't the sizzling noises . . ." (Leiris 1991, 83–84)
"In the center of this wooden envelope . . ." (Leiris 1991, 91)
"grapho-faun" (Leiris 1991, 80)
"Words and rocks contain a language . . ." (Smithson 1979, 87)
"The meaner the type . . ." (Emerson 1983, 454–455, 457)
"Language is concrete metaphysics" (Whitman 1984, 1628)
"Language is a perfect Geology . . ." (Whitman 1984, 1632)
"Were you thinking that those were the words . . ." (Whitman 1892, 176)
"from your liquid rims . . ." (Whitman 1892, 201–202)
"leave no role to our imagination . . ." (Bois and Krauss 1997, 129)
"finally (though not yet endlike) . . ." (Joyce 1939, 20)
"Every sentence in the *Wake* . . ." (Attridge 1988, 235)
"He could hear, of course, all kinds of words . . ." (Joyce 1961, 644)
"a nerve, a wire, a roadway . . ." (Fenollosa 1969, 22–23)
"The whole outward visible world . . ." (Boehme 1969, IX:1)
"a return to the primitive . . ." (West 1974a, 1043)
"the prevailing ideas . . ." (West 1974b, 123)
"striking" and "pressing" (Stam 1976, 29)
"curiologic (or circle-graphic) method . . ." (Stam 1976, 29)
"Everything has its mouth to manifestation" (Boehme 1969, I: 15)

footnotes:
"The motive for speech does not lie outside of language . . ." (Bruns 1974, 94)
"The word must communicate *something* . . ." (Benjamin 1978, 327)
"in order to break with a number of myths . . ." (Foucault 1995, 5)
"a species of motion" (Bulwer 1648, 21)
"As trembling of the water hath resemblance . . ." (Bulwer 1648, 46)
"remember what applies to all my verse . . ." (Hopkins 1956, 246)
"The first aim of Language . . ." (Horne Tooke 1860, 14)
"*Abbreviations* are the *wheels* of Language . . ." (Horne Tooke 1860, 13)

Ernst Chladni
"It would be beautiful . . ." (Benjamin 1977, 213)
"to re-discover . . ." (Ritter, in Benjamin 1977, 214)
"what romantic esotericism is all about" (Benjamin 1994, 239)
"written language . . ." (Benjamin 1977, 214)
"One is tempted to say . . ." (Benjamin 1977, 208)
"the script-like Ur-images of sound . . ." (Adorno 1990, 60)

Jean-Pierre Brisset
"The sword of fire which guarded the way . . ." (Brisset, in Yaguello 1991, 154)
"*All ideas uttered with similar sounds* . . ." (Brisset, in Pierssens 1980, 80)
"'l'eau j'ai' (I have water) . . ." (Lecercle 1985, 25)
"everything takes place as if human language . . ." (Pierssens 1980, 64)
"because language itself Brissetizes" (Lecercle 1990, 62)
loosening the reins (*rènes*) (see Pierssens 1980, 101)
"A l'origine . . ." (Foucault 1970b viii)

Novalis
"Could letters originally . . ." (Pfefferkorn 1988, 94)
"The paths of humans . . ." (Novalis 1966, 95) [translation by Jed Rasula]

Michel Leiris
"thought is originally word-erasing . . ." (Levinas 1992, 146)

Ernest Fenollosa
"the inventor of Chinese poetry . . ." (Kenner 1971, 192)
"this irreducibly graphic poetics . . ." (Derrida 1976, 92)

Clinamen
"basic bodies take a certain structure . . ." (Lucretius 1974, I. 908–915)
"a time smaller than the minimum . . ." (Deleuze 1990, 276)
"differ[ing] from nothingness . . ." (Valéry in Derrida 1982, 282)
"assemblages of signifying, phonic, and scriptural atoms . . ." (Kristeva 1989, 124)

“a sum, but not a whole”; “Nature is not attributive . . .” (Deleuze 1990, 267)
“not a matter of separation . . .” (Lyotard 1993, 16)
“so the capital sounds of 24 Letters . . .” (Defoe 1726, 34–35)
Bruno’s claim (Michel 1973, 81)
“atoms of time . . .” (Valéry 1972, 309)
“gro*my lo*mayut” (Markov 1968, 342)
“a willing error, a turn . . .” (Bloom 1975, 93)
“an initial error . . .” (Bloom 1975, 71)
“the savage god” (Shattuck 1968, 209)
“sans terre” (Thoreau 1982, 295)
“wandering signification” (Bloom 1975, 89)
“the system of constraints . . .” (Perec, in Motte 1986, 20)
“the noise upon which the word is based . . .” (Mackey 1993, 19)
A “refractive obliquity” (Mackey 1993, 254)
“fissure, fracture, incongruity . . .” (Mackey 1993, 19)
“an opening, an opportune alarm . . .” (Mackey 1993, 183)
“We may come, touch and go . . .” (Joyce 1939, 455)
“atomistic topology of the signifier” (Derrida 1987, 425)
“The divisibility of the letter . . .” (Derrida 1987, 489)
“A lapsus is revealing . . .” (Derrida 1984a, 21)
“the identity of a mark is also its difference . . .” (Derrida 1984a, 16)
“atomystique” (Derrida 1984a, 10)
“can break with every given context . . .” (Derrida 1982, 320)
“no longer translating one language into another . . .” (Derrida 1989, 102)
“to love inscription . . .” (Lyotard 1993, 19)
“*Derivatio* [diverting] is not simply leaving a shore . . .” (Lyotard 1993, xxix)
“by itself is the end of all critique” (Lyotard 1984, 13)
“a technique of transient passage . . .” (Knabb 1981, 50)
“psychogeographical method . . .” (Debord, in Knabb 1981, 50)
“with its disturbances and its glances . . .” (Breton, in Plant 1992, 59)
“Surrealism had invoked a world of floating encounters . . .” (Plant 1992, 59)
For Andrew Lang, the clinamen underlies (Andrew Lang, source unlocated)
“revolution of voluptuousness . . .” (Serres 1982a, 101)
“The minimal angle of turbulence . . .” (Serres 1982a, 100)
“Words form swarms . . .” (Pierssens 1980, 13)
“The queen of rhythm, syncope . . .” (Clément 1994, 5)
“The word can be erotic . . .” (Barthes 1975, 42)
“the word is a Psyche . . .” (Mandelstam 1977, 52)
“We come [by clinamen] to mind . . .” (Wilkinson 1890, 244)
“That will [voluntas] . . .” (Lucretius 1974, II. 259–260)
“If each thing hadn’t . . .” (Lucretius 1974, I. 168)
“a chaos of atoms . . .” (Pierssens 1980, 111)
“errantry does not align . . .” (Barthes 1978, 103)

footnotes:
"God created the world . . ." (Hartman 1981, 7)
"can avoid the mistakes of the system . . ." (Seyhan 1992, 81)
"God writes straight by crooked lines" (Levinas 1985, 110)
"began to think [him]self insane" (Smollett 1860, 243)
"word must transfix a momentary conjunction . . ." (Shattuck, in Jarry 1965, 19)

Further Reading

The corpus of literature on the subject of language is vast. What follows is intended primarily as a bibliographic guide to the materials and issues in *Imagining Language.* It generally resists redundancy with the prefaces, since the prefaces are allocated a certain referencing function to begin with. Nor does it seek comprehensiveness, as the bibliography itself pointedly favors titles that lead bibliographically to other titles. Finally, works by authors we have anthologized are listed in the bibliography but not singled out below.

Basic guides to the historical spectrum of linguistic thought are Harris and Taylor (1989), Kristeva (1989), and Menghem. Ducrot and Todorov offer a useful compendium of terms and concepts. The tradition of speculative linguistics inaugurated by Plato's *Cratylus* is surveyed by Eco (1995) and Genette. The Cratylian tradition is marked by exuberance and excess, which is the specific focus of Lecercle, Pierssens, and Yaguello, and discussed as a variety of mannerism by Hocke. A compendium of linguistic fecundity, largely French and predominantly literary, can be found in Duchesne and Leguay.

While philosophical precursors include Bacon, Locke, Leibniz, Vico, Bentham, and Humboldt, sustained philosophical examination of language is notably modern: Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Volosinov, Ortega y Gasset, Cassirer, Picard, Derrida, Deleuze, Irigaray, Eco (1986), Agamben, and Taylor. More linguistically oriented are Tyler (1978) and Whorf. For the historical foreground of modern philosophizing on language—studied in cultural context—see Aarsleff, Berlin, Cassedy, Foucault (1970a), Friedrich, Hudson, Kroll, Stafford (1979, 1991), and Deborah Steiner. Becker, LaBarre, Tyler (1987), and Wagner (1986) provide anthropological orientations to the topic. Other general speculations include Goux, Kugler, Thass-Thienemann, and Wilden (1987).

Semiotics has developed with an explicitly broad historical perspective, disposed to think of signs as evidence of sophisticated philosophical practice if not of explicit awareness. Nearly all semiotics is deeply indebted to the philosophy of C. S. Peirce. See Eco, Manetti, Innis, Baer, Merrell, Sebeok, and Wilden. Nöth offers a comprehensive inventory of semiotics that conscientiously includes philosophical and linguistic thought as it pertains to the subject of signs. The distinction between semiotics (the science of signs) and semiosis (the activity of a signifying cosmos) is a primary concern of Eco (1990) and Merrell.

For general studies concerned with the status of language in literature, see Attridge, Bakhtin, Bruns (1974), Byrd, Kristeva (1984), and Todorov (1982). Collections of various articles, or more exclusively focused studies of literary language, are Barthes (1986), Bradford, Kenneth Burke, Cassedy, Caws, Deleuze (1972), Derrida (1992), Foucault (1977), Jakobson (1987), Kittler (1990), Kristeva (1969, 1980), McCaffery, McCaffery and Nichol (1992), McGann, Prickett, George Steiner (1967), Wendy Steiner, Garrett Stewart, and Ulmer. The Parisian milieu of language speculation and critical theory is documented in Ffrench.

Words in Freedom

On Italian Futurism, see Caruso and Martini, Hanson, and the manifestos in Apollonio. Discussions include Clough, Perloff (1986), and White. Russian Futurist documents are in Lawton; with historical and critical commentary in Janecek and in Markov. The fate of Futurism in the development of Russian revolutionary culture is covered by V. Todorov. Erlich links literary Futurism with theoretical formalism. For typographic modernism in general, see Bohn, Bradford (1993), Drucker (1994), McGann, Seaman, and the visual anthologies by Castleman, Massin, and Spencer. Key anthologies of avant-garde poetry are Lucie-Smith, Rothenberg, Bohn (1993), and Rothenberg and Joris. Hedrick presents Van Doesburg's little-known poetry and literary theory, which is also discussed in Michelson. Marinetti's "words in freedom" are translated in Pioli; and Apollinaire's calligrams are translated with facsimile in Apollinaire (1980). Ball integrates mysticism with avant-garde language practice.

transition

Jolas's works have never been collected, although many are in *transition,* the run of which is available in research libraries in a facsimile reprint. Jolas followed up *transition* with a folio on "vertigralism" (1941), an anthology from *transition* (1949), and a survey of vanguard language (1948). The history of *transition* by McMillan places it in its modernist moment. Studies situating *Finnegans Wake* as language experiment in literary context are by Attridge, Bruns (1974), and Rasula (1997a). Theall extends Joycean implications to the post-Gutenberg media environment theorized by McLuhan.

Communities

In addition to Humboldt, the classic theorist of linguistic relativity is Whorf. Linguistic nationalism is chronicled in Olender. The elaborate cosmological linguistics of the Dogon are treated at length in Griaule and Calame-Griaule. For Boontling see Charles Adams; and see Franklyn on rhyming slang; Beier on canting; Macalister on secret languages; Bones on Rastafari; Brathwaite on "nation language" in the Caribbean; Gold on jazz argot; and Robert Adams on the vernacular. Signing is discussed in Davis, Fay, Lyon, and Way; signing poetry in Klima and Bellugi; and the impact of hearing impairment on the development of communications technologies in Ronell. See Peter Burke (1993 and 1995) for more on language communities. Also relevant is Halliday's theoretical map. In addition to Umiker-Sebeok and Sebeok, Leroi-Gourhan, and Critchley on gesture, see Jousse (an inspiration to Joyce). On linguistic play as social text, see Susan Stewart (1979).

Sound Effects

For an overview ranging from phonetics to literature, see Jakobson and Waugh. On the relationship of sound to meaning see Jakobson (1978). Garrett Stewart is a theorist of the "phonotext." Histories and examples of sound poetry are available in Chopin, Higgins, Kostelanetz, McCaffery (1998), McCaffery and Nichol (1978), and Scholz. (For Lettrism see "Alphabetic Dimensions" below.) Acoustic technologies are examined by Frank, Kittler (1987), McCaffery (1997), Ronell, Rasula (1997b, 1998), and in the collection edited by Kahn and Whitehead. The subjugation of voice by thought and speech from Aristotle through Hobbes to Condillac is traced in Appelbaum.

Divinities and Aliens

Dee's context and career are covered by Clulee. Shumaker discusses angelic speech in the Renaissance. The anthology edited by Guss focuses on interspecies communication. On glossolalia see Christie-Murray, Cutten, Goodman, Samarin, Cyril Williams, and de Certeau (1996). For the persistence of glossolalia in contemporary poetry and poetics see Barras. The new edition of Flournoy is recommended not only for its restored text but for its inclusion of informative supplementary essays. The case of Psalmanazar is discussed in Susan Stewart (1991), Needham, and Todorov (1994), and in Foley's biography.

Fictive Encounters

Cornelius offers a detailed summary of the imaginary voyage tradition, overlapping somewhat with Yaguello. An issue of *Yale French Studies* (no. 49, 1973) concentrates on the French writers. On Lewis Carroll see Sutherland, Schwab, Deleuze (1990), and Lecercle (1994). Meyers surveys language in science fiction.

Transpositions

On Bacon's infuence on cipher theories see Schoenbaum, and the Friedmans. Cryptography from Poe to the Internet is discussed in Rosenheim. On universal language schemes see Borges (1965), Jonathan Cohen, Murray Cohen, Eco (1995), Fraser, Knowlson, Land, Ormsby-Lennon, Salmon (1979), Shumaker, Singer, and Slaughter. See Bradford on Fogg, Steele, and related aspects of English prosody; and on pattern poetry see Higgins, and Hollander. The history of shorthand and its non-Romanic scripts is offered in Butler.

Method

On theory and practice of translation, see Becker, Robinson, George Steiner, and Venuti. Language games are documented in Augarde and discussed by Susan Stewart (1979). Anagrams are discussed in Lebensztejn. Motte's is an anthology of Oulipo theory. Pattern poetry and combinatorial procedures of composition (such as Caramuel's) are presented in Hallyn, Higgins, Hocke, and Pozzi. The technologically enhanced word is the subject of works by Baudrillard, Gumbrecht and Pfeiffer, Heim, Kittler, McLuhan, Ong (1982), and Theall. Foucault (1987) devotes a book to Roussel, who is also discussed in Leiris (1964) and Garrett Stewart. On Ronald Johnson see Davenport, and Selinger. Lund concisely addresses the challenge of Swift.

Mania

The literature on Schreber is voluminous—the bibliography in Allison (1988) runs to forty pages—but see Lecercle (1985), Sass (1994), Weiss (1989), and the articles collected in Allison (particularly Mannoni, Rabain, de Certeau, Lingis, Lyotard). The psychoanalytic literature is too extensive to annotate here, but Freud, Lacan, and Jung all wrote extensively on the Schreber case. General perspectives on madness and language are Abraham and Torok, Bateson, Deleuze (1990), Deleuze and Guattari, Kasanin, Lacan (1977), Sass (1992), Weiss, and Wilden (1972). The insanity of such authors as Hölderlin and Nietzsche has proved a tantalizing source of theoretical speculation; the entire body of work by Georges Bataille and Maurice Blanchot, for example, can be read in light of such provocation. Suggestive affiliations between mania and writing are charted in Artaud, Norman Brown (1959), Deleuze (1990), Deleuze and Guattari, Felman, Foucault (1977), Jakobson (1987), Lecercle, Lotringer, Mehlman (1972), Pierssens, Ronell, Rosenbaum and Sonne, Sollers, Starobinski, and Yaguello. Ingram offers contextualization for Smart, as does Vogler.

Cosmology

Language and mysticism are almost inextricably entwined. Useful orientations are Hocke, Katz, Padoux, Schimmel, Sells, and Cyril Williams. While the centrality of language to Kabbalah is such that any book on the latter will contain some discussion, the most copious and authoritative scholars are Scholem and Idel. Epstein's is a brief synopsis of Kabbalah, and Meltzer anthologizes pertinent texts. Primary Gnostic texts are in Foerster, and Jonas provides a valuable analysis. The primary source on Marcus is Irenaeus. On the historical background of taxonomic ordering and the quantification of thought see Ong (1958) and Foucault (1970a). Cohn-Sherbok compares alphabetic cosmogenesis in Kabbalah and Gnosticism. Llull's diagrammatic work is translated in two volumes. Godwin's is a pictorially oriented presentation of Kircher. See also the listing above under "Transpositions" of titles on universal language schemes. See Cooke on Khlebnikov. For other aspects of the Russian avant-garde see citations under "Words in Freedom" above. Grant is the main source of information on A. O. Spare.

Alphabetic Dimensions

For arguments that the privileging of writing systems with a phonetic base demonstrates a distinctly Eurocentric bias, see Derrida (1976), Roy Harris (1986), Mignolo, and Senner. Boone and Mignolo examine nonalphabetic writing systems, mainly from the Americas. The history of the alphabet is addressed in Marcel Cohen, Diringer, Drucker (1995), Gaur, Jensen, Massin, and Pitman and St. John. Firmage offers a compendium of letter lore. Aspects specific to alphabetic literacy are covered by Bolter, Gelb, Gellrich, Roy Harris (1995), Illich, Jean, Kernan, Kittler (1987), McArthur, McLuhan, Ong, and Theall. On Lettrism see Curtay, Isou, and Seaman. On Tory see Bowen. Blood is little known, but for Hurlbert; for other alphabetic reveries see Claudel, Jünger, Lawler on Valéry, and, in an expansively mythopoetic rendering, Graves. Kallir's method bears comparison with Beardsley (in "Cosmology") and Cohane.

Spelling, Saving, Spending

R. F. Jones's history of English provides basic background. Orthographic reform is summarized by Pitman and St. John, and for studies of particular reformers see Danielsson, Jespersen, and Johnston. Elizabethan orthography is addressed by Elsky and by Goldberg. Other aspects of writing are dealt with in Roy Harris (1986, 1995), Salmon (1979), and Morison, and punctuation specifically by Parkes.

Retentions and Secretions

The "Orphic" dimension of bio-poetics is argued in Sewell, and extended (but not under that name) by Kuberski. The Hermetic and romantic traditions of the world as book are variously addressed in Curtius, William Paulson, Scott, Serres (1982a), and Stafford (1979). See Pfefferkorn on Novalis. Chladni figures are scientifically reproduced in Waller. Special issues of *Yale French Studies* and *Sulfur* focus on Leiris (see, respectively, Levinas [1992] and Clifford). On Western fantasias inspired by hieroglyphics see Irwin, Sieburth, and Singer. Michaux, like Fenollosa and Pound, is a poet-speculator on hieroglyphics (1984a, 1987) and calligrapher of pictograms (1951, 1984b). On Brisset see Breton (1966), Foucault (1970b), Lecercle, Pierssens, and Yaguello. Grammar and sexuality are the concerns of Leupin, Ríos, and Ziolkowski. A semiotic material intransigence is the focus of Bois and Krauss.

Clinamen

On Lucretian linguistics, see J. M. Snyder. Deleuze (1990), Derrida (1984a), Kroll, Mehlman (1979), and Serres offer appraisals of the Lucretian heritage. Primary writings by the Situationists are collected in Knabb, and Plant's is a study of the movement. The catalogue edited by Sussman matches sumptuous production with valuable critique and documentation. Spencer Brown's *Laws of Form* has been influential in the sciences; but Baer, Byrd, and Merrell (1982) are among the few who attempt to extend his work to the humanities. N. O. Brown's work encompasses psychoanalysis (1959) and *Finnegans Wake* (1974).

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